Transitional Electoral Framework for Syria
International Electoral Policy and Practice

اطار عمل الانتخابات الانتقالية في سوريا
سياسة وتطبيق الانتخابات الدولية

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Introduction: Project Objective

The purpose of this project is to delineate and engage with the major questions in electoral policy and practice that will face Syrian leaders when they are finally able to achieve peace and organize the country's first post-conflict elections. Needless to say, Syrians will confront a host of complex challenges as they overturn decades of authoritarian rule and build representative governance within a fragile security environment. But it is important to recognize that running a first election is not simply about the logistics of recruiting candidates and getting voters to the polls. Rather, foundational policy choices that are made regarding the make-up of electoral institutions, regulation of political parties, drawing of district boundaries, mechanisms for minority representation and other key issues can have a profound impact on the character and trajectory of a young democracy's political dynamics—as well as the potential for renewed ethnic or sectarian violence. Yet these policy choices are often made quickly, under unavoidable domestic and international pressure to hold elections as soon as possible.

While the conflict rages on, then, Syrian exiles and the international community have already begun a productive dialogue about the shape of the post-conflict transition—including initiatives like *The Day After Project* at the U.S. Institute of Peace and the *Syria Transition Roadmap* published by the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies and Syrian Expert House. We hope to make a small contribution to this important effort. The overarching goal, of course, is to envision and help bring about a post-conflict governance system which maximizes representation and participation for the people of Syria.

Assumption about Election Circumstances

This Transitional Electoral Framework departs from a notional future scenario in which the Syrian civil war has ended via a negotiated political settlement mandating the creation of a pluralist democratic government. What follows are recommendations based on that assumption, describing one possible path (among many) toward a representative system that is stable and effective.

Section 1: A Legal Framework for Transitional Elections

Syria's transitional elections—including elections for local officials, a Constituent Assembly, and the first post-conflict national elections—must be grounded in the rule of law. Absent an elected government, legal authority will flow from three main sources: the negotiated peace agreement, UN Security Council resolutions, and interim laws adopted by a transitional governmental authority.

The Peace Agreement: Provisions Regarding Elections

The peace accords must establish basic legal structures and articulate core principles upon which interim election laws, administrative rules and institutions can be built. The peace accords should include agreements in these seven key electoral areas:

Legal foundation for civil and political rights.

The negotiating parties should dissolve the current Syrian constitution (adopted in 2012) and adopt the constitution of 1950 on an interim basis, until a duly elected Constituent Assembly can put forward a permanent constitution for public ratification. The 1950 constitution can serve as an interim legal foundation not only because it reaches back to a pre-Assad era, but because among the many Syrian constitutions it has popular legitimacy; it was adopted by an elected constituent assembly via a democratic process.[1] (Appendix 1) Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, the 1950 constitution has a detailed "Bill of Rights" with 28 articles enumerating progressive social and economic rights in addition to fundamental civil and political rights such as freedom of opinion, assembly and the press.[2] These provisions provide a legal safety net for any voter, candidate, journalist or other election participant or observer who feels his or her rights are being infringed.

Structure and appointment of an interim Election Management Body (EMB.)

The path to free and fair elections begins with a management body that is legitimate, expert and well-resourced. Outlining a basic EMB make-up within the peace accords would help legitimize this key institution.

Suggested language: "An Interim Syrian Election Commission (ISEC) will be created with no more than 11 members, three of which are international elections experts in an advisory role. The Commission's members shall reflect the diversity of Syrian society and will be chosen through a selection process managed by the transitional judiciary in consultation with the United Nations Mission." (see Section 4 for in-depth discussion.)

Timeframe and sequencing of transitional elections.

Societies recovering from authoritarianism and conflict need to fill a huge governance vacuum, quickly. They need a constitution to legitimize the state, national government to unify a divided population, and local governments to deliver services. But it is impossible to carry out these tasks simultaneously; they must be sequenced. Given the profound social ruptures created by the Syrian conflict—which endanger

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[1] Syrian Expert House. "Syria Transition Roadmap." Washington: Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies. 2013, p. 60-61.
[2] Ibid.

the very idea of a united Syria—there will likely be intense pressure to hold constituent-assembly and national elections as soon as possible after the signing of peace accords. However, we believe that beginning with rolling municipal elections would have several advantages.

First, the election of local councils would provide an immediate, tangible link between citizens and their new government—voters could quickly see their democracy 'in action.' Local council members reside in the community and can be held directly accountable for provision of daily services like water, roads and trash collection. In turn, the pragmatic orientation of local politics should encourage candidates and fledgling parties to steer away from ideological or ethnic platforms and focus on concrete proposals to improve daily life. This is a key component of mature and effective political parties. Second, prioritizing local council elections would honor and validate the heroic efforts of local leaders in rebel-controlled areas who have stepped up to provide governance and services during the conflict.[3] These grassroots governments could be the building blocks of a new Syrian state, providing a counterweight against excessive central power. Third, if municipal elections are held first, they might attract talented and ambitious candidates who prefer not to wait another year to run for national office. This could stem some of the inevitable "brain drain" from provinces to the capital. Finally, there may be a security benefit in pushing national elections to the transition's latter stages. Rivalries between regions will still be extremely tense in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, and national elections could be perceived as a winner-take-all contest to determine the future of Syria—particularly by new, poorly consolidated political parties. Municipal elections provide more manageable, localized contests that could serve as a demonstration and 'test run,' drawing heat away from the national contest, building party capacity and allowing extra time for tensions to calm.

It will also be important to ensure that the permanent constitution for a new Syria is drafted and promulgated via an open, democratic process—this was repeatedly expressed as the will of Syrian nationalists prior to authoritarian rule. (Appendix 1) Election of a constituent assembly and a plebiscite to popularly ratify their draft constitution will set the new state on firm, legitimate ground.

Therefore, the peace accords should adopt the following timetable for transitional elections (Appendix 2):

6-8 months from signing of peace agreement: Rolling, non-partisan municipal elections.

12 months from signing of peace agreement: Governorate and Constituent Assembly elections.

18 months from signing of peace agreement: constitutional referendum.

24 months from signing of peace agreement: Legislative Assembly elections.

Principle objectives of electoral system (see Section 5 for in-depth discussion.)

The drafters of the peace accords can chart a course for the future Constituent Assembly by articulating strategic goals for Syria's electoral system.

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[3] Block, Melissa and Deborah Amos. "Local Opposition Councils Act as Government in Parts of Syria." NPR. 20 December 2012.

Suggested language: "The design of Syria's electoral system will prioritize strategic national objectives of fair representation, reconciliation, building responsible political parties with ideological bases, encouraging pluralism, increasing electoral participation, increasing government efficiency and capability, and international legitimacy."

Role of international organizations (see Section 2 for in-depth discussion.)

We believe it will be advantageous for international experts to provide robust assistance—while keeping an appropriately low profile—to ensure that transitional elections are timely, free, fair and secure. The legal authority for a UN presence should come from the peace accords.

Suggested language: "The United Nations is requested to:

Advise, support and assist the government and people of Syria in advancing political dialogue and national reconciliation and developing processes for holding elections and referendums.

Advise, support and assist the Temporary Constitutional Council/Transitional Government in appointing members to the Interim Syrian Election Commission (ISEC)

Coordinate international assistance."

Political eligibility for members of Assad regime. (see Section 6 for in-depth discussion)

The details of candidate and political-party eligibility will be set forth in laws adopted by the transitional authority. But the peace accords should express a clear intent to exclude the leaders of the previous regime from seeking elected office in the new democracy.

Source of laws to govern transitional elections.

The administration of transitional elections will require a battery of laws and administrative rules, governing everything from voter eligibility to procedures for adjudicating claims of malpractice. Assuming that the peace accords will empower some kind of Transitional Government (TG) to handle executive and legislative matters, the TG should have the authority and responsibility to adopt the following types of legislation, at a minimum:

Measures to establish, empower and fund the Interim Syrian Election Commission (ISEC) according to the framework set forth in the peace accords.

Measures to regulate political parties.

Measures to guide and govern election administration. Election rules should be drafted and approved by the ISEC and then submitted for legislative approval.

<u>Interim Election Laws</u>

A comprehensive legal framework must set broad strategic objectives for the shaping of political dynamics *and* answer many thousands of technical and operational questions about the mechanics of obtaining and tallying millions of unique secret ballots from eligible voters. The latter portion—the specific rules and regulations governing election administration—will be drafted by the experts of

ISEC and adopted into law by the TG Interim (and permanent) election laws in the new Syrian democracy will need to grapple with these and other topics[4]:

1. Electoral System
   a. Defining the type of system: plurality/majority, single-member or multi-member districts, open-list vs. closed list, etc.
   b. Thresholds for winning seats
   c. Mathematical procedures for turning votes into representation
2. Electoral Management
   a. Structure, funding and procedures of EMB
3. Voter Registration
   a. Defining eligibility (including age, criminal record, etc.)
   b. Registration procedures (including voter ID requirements)
   c. Absentee voting eligibility and procedures
   d. Voter education
4. Voting Operations
   a. Election dates
   b. Locations and staffing of polling sites
   c. Secrecy guarantees
   d. Ballot design
5. Vote Counting
   a. Tabulation and auditing
   b. Certification procedures
   c. Recount thresholds and procedures
6. Parties and Candidates
   a. Eligibility and registration
   b. Fair access to media
   c. Financing
   d. Codes of conduct
   e. Transparency/disclosure requirements
7. Media and Elections
   a. Regulations to ensure fair access and non-discrimination
   b. Regulations on the conduct and release of opinion polls
8. Electoral Integrity
   a. Observer rights, accreditation and codes of conduct
   b. Election-related crimes and penalties
9. Electoral Justice
   a. Independent arbitration court: make-up, procedures, deadlines
   b. Thresholds: challenger eligibility and activities subject to challenge
   c. Procedures for appeal
   d. Alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms

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[4] Ace Project "Legal Framework" http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/lf Accessed 9 December 2013

Finally, to provide a legal basis for international assistance, the United Nations Security Council should re-authorize UNSMIS with an expanded mandate to potentially include:

Advise and support the ISEC, as well as the Syrian Transitional Government, on the process for holding elections,

Promote national dialogue and consensus-building on the drafting of a national constitution,

Advise the Syrian Transitional Government in developing effective civil and social services,

Contribute to the coordination and delivery of international assistance.[5]

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[5] UN Security Council Resolution 1546. 8 June 2004

Section 2: Role of the International Community in Syria

Post-conflict Syria will attract many interested parties from the international community who want a role in rebuilding the Syrian society. The multifaceted Syrian conflict and lack of a cohesive national identity could potentially lead to difficulty for the international community in implementing technical assistance and electoral observation. Because of the large number of international groups and Syrian interests involved, coordination will be essential.

Broadly, the international community will provide several types of assistance during Syria's transition to democracy. Election observation, party training, electoral security, and technical assistance are the three main aspects of the elections in which the international community will be involved. Additionally, there is room for international players to participate in Syria's transitional justice system and to evaluate human rights conditions in the country.

The United Nations (UN) will play two important roles in post-conflict Syria. First, it will provide technical assistance to the transitioning governing body on a wide variety of issues, such as the process for drafting a new constitution and scheduling elections. Second, the U N will serve as the main coordinator for the international community's participation in the Syrian post-conflict transition. Serving in this coordinating role will ideally prevent duplication of efforts or resources on projects that are similar or that could potentially be at odds (such as funding different types of voting machines). It will also allow international actors to share best practices and common challenges in order to provide collaborative assistance.

The UN mission in Syria will be mandated by the UN Security Council, and will be slated to last for twelve months, which will likely be extended. This mission will house the UN offices operating in Syria, and the Department of Political Affairs' Electoral Assistance division will provide a vision of what the international community's role should be in Syria leading up to its first elections. The UN mandate offices will also house the UN Civilian Police force's operations (see Section 7: Electoral Security). Other UN services provided by the mission will be modeled after the UN transition offices in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, and could include family reunification efforts or organizing dialogue between the different political factions.

In terms of structure, the mission will be led by a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, who will likely have two deputies. One deputy will focus on political affairs, and the other on humanitarian, development, and reconstruction efforts, including vetting appointed EMB members. These offices will counsel the Syrian transitional governing body on steps to take and present them options for governing. The UN will not promote a specific agenda, and can serve as a scapegoat if the transitional governing body makes a decision unpopular with the Syrian people.

Other intergovernmental organizations will also participate in Syria's transition to democracy.

Election observers from the League of Arab States (LAS) will help give the first Syrian elections legitimacy in the region. While member countries of the LAS have been divided on how to best deal with the Syrian conflict[6], all members will   support an end to the violence and have endorsed the

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[6] Georgy, Michael. "Arab states urge action against Syrian government." *Reuters*, September 01, 2013. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/01/us-syria-crisis-arabs-idUSBRE9800GJ20130901.

organization of the Geneva II convention.[7] Historically, the LAS has not had a clear institutional framework guiding international election observation, nor has it dedicated substantial funding to these activities.[8] To prepare for observation in Syria, the LAS should draft an Election Observation Plan.

The European Union (EU) will also provide an electoral observation mission. It has vast experience and dedicated funding for election observation throughout the world.[9]

The Organization for Islamic Cooperation will also provide election observers.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) will manage out of country voting for displaced and immigrant Syrians (see Section 4: Electoral Institutions).

We also expect participation of a variety of international nongovernmental organizations, such as the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, the National Democratic Institute, and International Foundation on Election Systems (IFES). These organizations will provide technical support to political parties and different groups in the electorate, such as women and people with disabilities. IFES will support the EMB in capacity building.

The international community will also play a role in Syria's Electoral Management Body—the UN will have a nonvoting position on the commission, and the League of Arab States will have a voting position on the EMB commission (see Section 4: Electoral Institutions).

In terms of transitional justice, the International Criminal Court (ICC) does not feasibly have a role because Syria is not a member of the Rome Statute.[10] Thus, in order for the ICC to be involved, it would have to be mandated by the UN Security Council, which would be unlikely due to Russia's ability to veto any such motion. The L A Sis not strong enough as a regional body to support a tribunal either. Instead, the Syrian transitional government will create a transitional justice truth and reconciliation committee that will include both Syrian and international jurists. The UN offices will help select and vet the international members of the committee. This committee's mandate would allow them to interview parties from all sides of the conflict and draft a report revealing facts about the events that took place. Prosecutorial authority will be left to the Syrian justice system.

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[7] "FCO welcomes League of Arab States strong endorsement of Geneva II process."
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/response-to-league-of-arab-states-syria-statement>.
[8] International IDEA, "The Integrity of Elections: The Role of Regional Organizations"
http://www.idea.int/publications/integrity-of-elections/upload/The-Integrity-of-Elections-chapter4.pdf
[9] "EU Election Observation Missions" http://eeas.europa.eu/eueom/
[10] Human Rights Watch, "Q&A: Syria and the International Criminal Court"
http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/09/17/qa-syria-and-international-criminal-court

Section 3: Non-State Electoral Stakeholders

Non-state electoral stakeholders serve a number of very important roles in the democratic transition process and support for founding elections. Non-state actors can support the civic education process, a longer term effort to teach and discuss elements of democracy and civic participation which can include efforts that focus on youth education, restructuring of national curricula, and programming for media outlets. Voter education and information campaigns are also a very important part of the transition and pre-election process in which non-state actors can and should participate. This work brings information to voters about the new electoral process, how it works, and why voting is very important. It is essential to inform new voters with specific details about how, when, and where they vote. In Syria, a very specific effort must be made to provide information to a much-expanded electorate including women and other underrepresented groups. Non-state actors should also play a role in domestic election monitoring bodies. This will require both the training of these actors to monitor as well as possibly training certain organizations to be responsible for conducting other teams. The role of domestic monitors in the founding election will be important and observers must be seen as impartial actors in this process. Non-state actors should also play a role in advocacy work to support the entire transition and the creation and conduct of democratic processes. Advocacy efforts will play a key role in establishing support and necessary buy-in from the Syrian people for this process. Finally, non-state actors must also be prepared to play a role in service provision. As Syria begins to reconstruct and the political transition moves forward, service provision can support a peaceful transition for this process.

This section assess the state of civil society and non-state actors prior to the revolution and their probable existence and capacity post-revolution to assist with electoral transition efforts including civic and voter education, voter information outreach, election monitoring, advocacy, and provision of services. The extent to which non-state electoral stakeholders in Syria will have the capacity to assist with necessary parts of the administration of founding elections is somewhat limited based on the severe limitations placed on the growth of formal civil society organizations under the Assad regime and the decimation that some of these non-state actors and their networks have suffered as a result of the ongoing civil war. New non-state actors have also become players in the conflict and their roles both as positive contributors to the electoral transition and as spoilers will be assessed. Society under the Assad regime was already highly divided across a number of lines of sect, religion, race, and socioeconomic status. While the conflict has served to unite some of these groups it has also deepened other divisions and created new social fault lines. Organized relief work and other civil society development efforts face a number of challenges as this point and these fault lines will continue to pose a challenge in the post-conflict context and may create some significant barriers in the organizing of founding elections.[11]

State of Civil Society Organizations prior the Civil War

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[11] Fesal, Heba "The Dilemma of Civil Society Work in Syria- revisited" *The Syrian Sun.* January 21, 2013. http://syriansun.info/the-dilemma-of-civil-society-work-in-syria-revisited/.

Prior to the current conflict, the Syrian regime used emergency laws for a number of years to ban most kinds of formal collective organizing outside of government-sponsored organizations. This has resulted in relatively little independent NGO life in Syria.[12] Prior to the conflict, there were a number of non-state organizations though most remained relatively informal. Religious organizations were, and still are, a primary means of informal, non-state organization of society in Syria. There were also a number of traditional charitable associations that were constructed around wealthy members of communities and these organizations typically ran service delivery for the poor. Some other community organizations did exist but these were very small, informal organizations that were created to deal with specific issues within the community and were based upon patrons with connections for funding and security. Finally, a number of Syria Trust organizations existed that were created and funded by the Assad regime. These were by far the most well organized and most professional development organizations in the country.[13] In 2000, the Assad regime attempted to develop civil society in a controlled manner that would keep such organizations supportive of the Assad regime and serve Assad's economic modernization reforms without actually subverting its political control. The regime gave funding and licenses to a handful of nonprofit organizations in the fields of development, social affairs, and health. The Syria Trust for Development worked with NGOs to prepare proposes for funding and grants opportunities and used Syrian experts outside of the country to train NGO staff in the necessary skills. With the support of the Syria Trust for Development, a few small development NGOs were established.[14]

Possible Election Process Support from Traditional CSOs

Traditional charitable associations were set up around wealthy individuals in communities. It is likely that many of these wealthy individuals will have left Syria, breaking many of these associations and their networks. It is unlikely that these associations will have continued to function through the conflict and will provide any kind of useful network or organization structure for the election effort.

There is a greater chance that some of the very small and highly localized community organizations may still exist or be reestablished to help support election activities. Since these organizations worked on locally specific issues, they could potentially be very strong in mobilizing voters, providing local voter education, and conducting local registration work.

The small number of development NGOs that were formed not long before the civil war began may or may not still exist. It is difficult to determine. If these organizations received any support from the Syria Trust for Development it is likely that they have not continued to exist and if they have, will not be trusted by the public as a source of election information and support.

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[12] Fesal.

[13] Bosman, Marieke. "The NGO sector in Syria –an overview" Briefing Paper 30, June 2012. INTRAC International NGO Training and Research Centre. http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/746/Briefing-Paper-30-The-NGO-sector-in-Syria.pdf

[14] Kawakibi, Salam. "What might have been: a decade of civil activism in Syria." *Open Democracy.* March 11, 2013. http://www.opendemocracy.net/salam-kawakibi/what-might-have-been-decade-of-civil-activism-in-syria.

The Syria Trust for Development, if it still exists after the conflict, will not be allowed to participate in the election support work. As a formerly Assad supported organization, it has the most professional expertise and training, but it will not be trusted by the Syrian people. It would be advantageous to find some of these former employees if they are still living in Syria and examine the possibility of employing these people with new organizations to help with voter education and outreach as they are skilled professionals, but this will have to be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

<u>Provision of Civic Education, Voter Education and Outreach by University Academics and Student Communities</u>

It is possible that universities, academics, and their student networks can play an integral role in civic education and voter education and outreach. Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, dissent against the regime was rare at Syrian universities. If it did occur, it resulted in weighty penalties of expulsion, harassment, and sometimes imprisonment. For these reasons, students overall did not engage in any anti-regime activity. University faculty and academics were also unlikely to criticize the regime for fear of the same penalties.[15]

The conflict has had some significant effects on the university system, the academic and student networks, and the university infrastructure itself that may limit the capacity of this group for providing electoral assistance. There has been direct damage inflicted on university buildings and equipment, most significantly at the prominent universities in Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs. There have also been reported deaths and kidnappings of Syrian professors. It is estimated that between 9 and 30% of academics have left Syria during the conflict. Academics and students have fled the country and have become refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt as well as other locations. Some of these refugees have created academic and student organizations outside of Syria including the Union of Free Syrian Academics and the Union of Free Syrian Students. The Syrian Revolution Coordination Committee coordinated student action on campuses as the conflict began and many private universities became involved very quickly.[16] For this reason, universities are no longer seen as neutral entities as many became involved in revolutionary activities. Many academics such as those in the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies and the Syrian Expert House are forming policy advisory groups outside of Syria as they can no longer operate within the country safely.

The new student and academic organizations operating outside of Syria have very strong potential to be used to further the effort of civic education, voter education, and voter outreach work. These groups will be easy to organize, educate, and train outside of Syria and then deploy when necessary. Given their high levels of education and efforts to organize outside of the country, they can provide a very strong network that will be respected as administrators of this work once operating in Syria. Efforts for

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[15] Watenpaugh, Keith. "Uncounted and Unacknowledged: Syria's Refugee University Students and Academics in Jordan." Joint UC Davis Human Rights Initiative and Institute for International Education. Pg. 8. http://www.academia.edu/3474289/Uncounted_and_Unacknowledged_Syrias_Refugee_University_Students_and_Academics_in_Jordan

[16] "The Syrian Revolution Coordination Committee at Private Universities." May 6, 2013. Syria Untold. http://www.syriauntold.com/en/work-group/2887.

broader civic education should be spearheaded by this group of actors, both those remaining inside the country as well as those currently organizing outside. There are members of the educational community within Syria participating in international NGOs such as iEARN, in which Syrian teachers participate in projects that promote cross-cultural dialogues and civic education development.[17] Teachers and professors working with these organizations should be contacted to participate in civic education and voter education efforts.

Advocacy Efforts and Service Provision by the Business Community

The position of Syrian businessmen towards the uprising was based on several factors including the relationship of the business man and his proximity to the circles of power of the regime, the size of their business inside and outside of Syria and the autonomy that might have given them toward the regime, the impact of their business on government economic policy over the last decade, and other sectarian, ethnic, and geographic affiliations that may have determined whether they would remain pro-Assad or support the revolutionary opposition. Because of the variety of complication factors and interests listed above, the Syrian business community has not acted collectively. Despite many strong links to the Assad regime, there were clear pockets of dissent within the business community from the beginning of the conflict. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Deir-ez-Zor, the oil rich capital of one of the provinces, publicly declared its support for the opposition. A general strike in the summer of 2011 in Hama and Homs also demonstrated that dissent within the business community existed and was relatively strong. The business communities of Damascus and Aleppo initially remained most supportive of the regime, as they had been more directly impacted by the benefits of close connections with the Assad regime than businesses in more remote locations in the country. Throughout the conflict, there has also been significant departure of members of the business community from the country that may result in pockets of the country where the business community may be less able to assist in these efforts.[18] A new business coalition called the Syrian Business Council was created in March 2012 to respond to the economic needs of the Syrian people during the conflict. The Syrian Enterprise and Business center also exists as a Syrian non-profit that was created with the cooperation of the EU with the Syrian Business Forum that was established as part of the national coalition of the Syrian revolution and opposition forces.

While business actors have been split in the conflict with some supporting the regime and some supporting the opposition, the still functioning business councils and pro-opposition business networks will have the community ties and money to conduct effective advocacy campaigns. The Syrian business community may also have a role to play in assisting with election advocacy and service provision efforts. A number of business councils including the Syrian Business Council in Dubai, UAE and the Syrian German Business Council continue to operate and conduct training and capacity building events for their members. These skills and networks could be used as part of the election advocacy effort to encourage support for this process and information dissemination given the very important ties businesses have to their communities. The Business Councils have previously run trainings, education

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[17] iEARN-Syria. http://www.iearn.org/country/iearn-syria
[18] Yazigi, Jihad. "Syria's civil war and the business community." European Council on Foreign Relations. November 1, 2013. http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/syrias_civil_war_and_the_business_community

workshops, and will have the training skills necessary to effectively conduct advocacy campaigns. It may also be possible to tap some of the business networks created outside the country by refugees who have fled. Businessmen who have left are likely to be wealthy with more means and possible connections both outside and within the country that could support the election effort.

The business community should also be supported in playing a significant role in coordinating service provision. Given the business and trade networks they have established within and outside Syria as well as the greater financial resources they may have, this group can help fill the gap of service provision until reconstruction in Syria gets under way. Service provision can be a very influential part of supporting or undermining the democratic transition process. Already, organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood as well as other organizations that do not support a democratic transition have adeptly moved in to fill the service provision gap, winning the hearts and minds of Syrians who have been seriously affected by the civil war. Other actors such as those from the business community who are willing not only to provide services but also support a democratic transition in Syria must supplant these groups or transitional electoral efforts could be seriously undermined.

Voter Education and Outreach, Advocacy, Service Provision, and Monitoring by New Non-State Actors

A number of non-state actor organizations have formed outside of Syria during the course of the conflict and a number of these groups are likely to play a positive role in the provision of voter education, outreach, monitoring, advocacy, and service provision. A large Syrian refugee population now exists in Lebanon and these refugees have established several civil society organizations for media, politics, and human rights. In two camps, there are organizations of Syrians working to support chance in Syria as well as organizations providing refugee relief. Organizations working on media, politics, and human rights issues include Dawlaty, Bidayaat, Waw al-Wasel, and Noun. Organizations providing aid to refugees cinlude Sarda, Basma wa Zeitouneh, Sawa li Ajl Souria, the Ward Teram for Psychosocial Support and Najda Now.[19] There is also a large Syrian refugee population in Jordan where similar organizations have also been established including Syria Women Organization to help Syrians in need in Jordan.[20] Refugee students and academics are also creating camp universities there.[21]

The significant capacity of NGOs now operating outside of Syria by Syrians is likely to provide the best basis for voter outreach, education, advocacy, monitoring, and service provision. These groups can be trained outside of the country to further develop their capacity and organizational plans and then be deployed into the country once the post-conflict transition begins. The range of these organizations that include humanitarian, media, human rights, politics, and education have a range of capacity for different kinds of training, civic education, and civic outreach that can be central for election support.

The Role of Religious Organizations

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[19] "Syrian Civil Society Takes Root in Lebanon." *Syrian Observer.* August 7, 2013. http://syrianobserver.com/Features/Features/Syrian+Civil+Society+Takes+Root+in+Lebanon.

[20] "Jordan: Civil Society at the heart of Syrian refugee response." *Irin News. April 11, 2012.* *http://www.irinnews.org/report/95273/jordan-civil-society-at-heart-of-syrian-refugee-response.*

[21] Watenpaugh, 16.

While religious organizations and networks may be some of the most intact networks post-conflict, these may prove difficult and quite dangerous to engage in election work. The rise of the Islamist Alliance in the country as well as the penetration of the Muslim Brotherhood back into the country may create more room for spoilers in these networks than those willing to work towards a democratic transition. The Muslim Brotherhood was forced out of existence in Syria in the 1980s after the Baathist regime squashed a Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama and membership in the organization became punishable with death. Once the uprising began, however, the Muslim Brotherhood has moved its network back into Syria a there are a large number of groups that have served as fronts for the Brotherhood including organizations such as the Civil Society Organization' Union, the Syrian Society for Humanitarian Relief, and the Syrian Human Rights Committee.[22] This may create some serious issues not only with religious networks but also with currently active non-state actors in the country.

Creation of a Provincial Citizen Oversight Commission (PCOC)

Given the number of disparate non-state actors and the possibility that many of the organizations and networks that they previously operated within have been destroyed or their capacity significant reduced through the course of the conflict, it is recommended that a new body, the Provincial Citizen Oversight Commission, be created for the purposes of organizing and delivering efforts of education, monitoring, advocacy, and service provision. Legitimizing a new body of non-state actors could serve to engage individuals with relevant skills who are no longer members of more formal networks or organizations, engage and re-engage parts of the population who were previously excluded from traditional civil society bodies under the Assad regime, and gain the participation of and support from members of opposition groups who will need to be gainfully engaged in the transition process as demilitarization, demobilization, and reintegration commences. The PCOC can draw membership from the municipal level and receive training to conduct voter education, advocacy, and monitoring efforts. The exact procedure for creating this body and its size can be decided upon and instituted by the transitional government with external advisement.

Assistance for Capacity Building of Participating Non-State Actors

The majority of non-state actors who many play a part in voter education, outreach, advocacy and service provision during the transition will require significant support and capacity building. The groups will require technical assistance, training, and significant funding. The UN should play a strong supportive role in providing technical support for coordination, voter and civic education, and voter registration efforts. Bilateral technical assistance should also come from organizations founded in the Syrian diaspora of intellectuals around the world, especially in America, as well as from other formal organizations that specialize in providing technical political processes assistance to develop the capacity of civil society groups.

Possible Non-State Challengers to the Elections Process

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[22] Hassan, Hassan. "How the Muslim Brotherhood Hikacked Syria's Revolution." March 13, 2013. Foreign Policy.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/13/how_the_muslim_brotherhood_hijacked_syria_s_revolution.

It is likely that the post-conflict transition period will suffer significantly from spoilers associated with religiously affiliated groups as well as pro-Assad individuals and groups. As mentioned previously, groups including the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist Alliance, and other Salafist organizations have become major actors in Syria since the start of the civil war. Many of these organizations are affiliated with other groups conducting service provision as well as conducting it themselves throughout the country. Some of these groups do not support a democratic transition in the country and, therefore, will not and should not be associated with any of the elections processes. Other groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood may be willing to take part in the process, but may conduct voter outreach and education with very specific political goals that may undermine the overall democratic process through undue influence. The potential affiliation of non-state actors with these groups should be recognized if they are to be considered in playing any role in the voter education, outreach, advocacy, and service delivery components of this transition.

Section 4: Electoral Institutions

<u>The size and membership model for the Commission</u>

The Interim Syrian Election Commission (ISEC) will be a transitional independent body that will take process in a constitutional referendum. The ISEC should preferably consist of 11 members (including the chair) and will be composed by experts selected among all of Syria's ethno-sectarian as well as political groups. In the ISEC composition, the media and the academic community will also be represented.

The selection of the members of the ISEC will be conducted upon the recommendations of the temporary government and vetting by the UN. Eight out of eleven members of the ISEC will seek to represent the composition of local population while the three remaining members will represent the key international stakeholders consisted of the following: one member from the LAS, one member from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and one member from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The LAS and the CIS will designate one member each to the ISEC while the OSCE will designate an election expert representing the European community. The three international members will provide advice to the ISEC on key decision, but at the same time will ensure voting balance among other members representing different groupings.

This composition of the ISEC is proposed in order to account for three dynamics: (1) to ensure fair representation of all ethno-sectarian communities in Syria, particularly following the hardening of the ethno-sectarian identities after nearly 30 months of civil war; (2) to represent the voice of the political opposition as key stakeholders; (3) to represent the universities and academic community as a vibrant and constructive actors in shaping Syria's political developments before and during the war; and (4) the necessity of international involvement, particularly to ensure that no one grouping can achieve simple majority within the ISEC.

Even though the composition of ISEC will be transitory in nature, all levels of the ISEC will seek to operate independently, impartially and transparently. To build confidence and local buy-in of the electoral process, ISEC meetings may be open to public and the media, and the decisions taken at the ISEC will seek to reflect neutrality and professionalism.[23]

To handle the complexities of the electoral process, the ISEC will also establish its *Secretariat* that will be in charge of implementing ISEC's decisions and provide administrative support. In this election, the *Secretariat* will be composed of a small ad-hoc body of local experts; however, in a few couple of years, ISEC will need to rely on Syrian civil servants to serve in this body as permanent staff[24]. In addition to the Secretariat, the ISEC will also establish an office of Political Parties' Registration and Certification and a department of Voter Education.

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[23] United Nations: *Election Administration* (Chapter 6)
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter6.htm
[24] International Idea *" The Development of Professional Electoral Management"*
http://www.idea.int/publications/emd/upload/EMD_chapter6.pdf

International Representation in the ISEC

All members of the ISEC will have voting rights except the representatives of the international community who will sit at the ISEC board solely to provide technical advice while fostering the local ownership of the process. Additionally, the international members at the ISEC will also assist in drafting the election law and other related regulations in order to ensure that the legislation promotes inclusiveness and integrity and meets international standards.

The Portfolio of Responsibilities for the ISEC

Syria's ISEC will have responsibilities over: (1) Drafting the election law and other related legislation; (2) Voter registration; (3) Candidate certification, following international vetting; (4) Balloting; and (5) Results tabulation and certification.

Drafting the Election Regulations

The decree on creation of the ISEC adopted by the Syrian transitional government, among other provisions, stipulates that one of the core responsibilities of this management body is to draft the election regulation including those governing political parties. Local members of the ISEC will be closely advised on best practices by the international experts sitting in the board of ISEC. It is worth noting that the ISEC will not act as a substitute legislator, but in absence of other commissioned bodies to handle election legislation it will be mandated to draft the related regulations.

Several principles should be adhered to when the ISEC is mandated to draft such regulations [25]:

- Adhere with basic electoral principles such as the secrecy of the ballot and integrity of voting
- Provide for the authority of the ISEC as well as define scope of its involvement in the electoral process
- Provide for a process whereby political contestants and voters are allowed to file complaints arising from the ISEC decisions

The content of the election regulations will be primarily drawn on the professional experience of the ISEC members and will incorporate suggestions from the international representatives primarily on basic principles in a democratic electoral process including inclusiveness, and integrity of the voting process. International IDEA could also be a key partner in assisting ISEC to draft the electoral framework through facilitating an ISEC working group to participate in series of workshops and seminars to be potentially hosted in Damascus, Istanbul or Amman[26]. The electoral regulations will also contain a law on political parties which not only be drafted but will also be handled by the ISEC's Office on Political Party Registration and Certification.

Voter Registration

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[25] International Idea "International Electoral Standards *Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections*" Pg. 22 http://www.idea.int/publications/ies/upload/electoral_guidelines.pdf

[26] International Idea "*IDEA involved in the drafting of the new election law in Mongolia*" http://www.idea.int/elections/mongolia_05.cfm

Voter registration, given massive internal and external displacement of Syrians, will be one of the foremost challenges that the ISEC will encounter. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that around 4.5 million Syrians remain displaced within Syria's borders[27] while about more than two million are sheltered in refugee camps in Iraq (202,976); Lebanon (818,000); Turkey (519,938); and Jordan (553,000)[28]. The registration will not be able to be conducted upon the 2004 census, and new voters' list will be compiled.

In this undertaking, the ISEC will be closely supported by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which has been providing relief supplies to the IDPs sheltered in collective camps throughout Syria, including in hard-to-reach cities such as Aleppo, Azzaz, Karameh etc[29]. As part of aid delivery, UNHCR has maintained a registry of displaced families and persons within Syria, and therefore could assist ISEC in setting-up mobile registration facilities inside or in close proximity with collective shelters. IDPs in these shelters will be invited to confirm their names, their family-member names and their voting age. The mobile registration facilities will operate for a period of one to two weeks in order to provide for an extended opportunity for voters to make corrections or additions to the registry. The same mobile facilities will be set-up in the voting day as well where the registered voters can cast their ballots in close supervision of the ISEC staff and international monitors.

Candidate Certification

The certification of the candidates running in the CA and municipal elections will be done by the ISEC, however, in the subsequent elections for constituent assembly and national elections, the certification will conducted by ISEC only after the UN has performed the necessary vetting procedures that will primarily screen for complicity in gross human rights violations.

Political Party Finance

The financing for the political parties will be regulated by the ISEC to lead to the establishment of an international trust fund for political parties where the funding disbursement is facilitated by the UN and accounting conducted by the ISEC. In the subsequent elections, ISEC will facilitate a proportional amount of public funding disbursement that will come in form of annual allowance for the parties who manage to get seats in the national parliament. This funding will be minimal, but will help parties finance their internal activities. Furthermore, the parties will also be allowed to fund-raise through party-membership subscription and in private basis through in-kind donations[30]. The limitations to private donations from individuals, companies and enterprises will be defined in the regulations.

Balloting

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[27] UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) "*Syria Crisis*" http://syria.unocha.org/
[28] Mercy Corps "*Quick facts: What do you need to know about the Syrian refugee crisis*" http://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syrian-refugee-crisis
[29] The UN Refugee Agency: "*UNHCR pushes aid in Syria as winter looms*" http://www.unhcr.org/526659cb6.html
[30] International Idea "International Electoral Standards: *Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections*"pg. 71-74

Voting process will be conducted and overseen by the ISEC. The Commission will help in identifying polling locations, in setting up the polling centers, and in determining the voting procedures. ISEC will also conduct and oversee the voting process for displaced persons within Syria, and will be closely assisted by the UNHCR. The voting will last for two consecutive days where the polling stations will open 07:00 am through 07:00 pm. Polling station layout and staff training could help the ISEC in reducing the cost, but also building capacities for the future elections[31]. On Election Day, the ISEC will be responsible to conduct the following:

- Verify voters identity and eligibility
- Keep records of voters turnout
- Keep records of the total number of valid, spoiled and invalid ballots
- Preform reconciliation procedures (match the ballot boxes with their unique safety seals)
- Provide sufficient space for domestic and international monitors

Results Tabulation and Certification

Vote count and tabulation will be done by the ISEC-appointed commissioners present in the polling stations, with parallel vote tabulation to be conducted by an ad-hoc coalition of international NGOs, such as IFES, International Republican Institute (IRI), and NDI if they are provided sufficient space to operate. The election law regulates that vote count is performed in the presence of representatives of candidates and political parties as well as in the presence of international and domestic observers. The election regulations also clearly stipulates the procedures for transferring of the certified copies and results of counting and other related materials from the polling centers to the counting center managed by the ISEC where the consolidation of aggregate results will take place. The tabulation for all polling stations should provide the following information: the number of ballots used and returned; the number of blank, spoiled and invalid ballots; and, the number of votes for each candidate and political party in a standardized format. After each polling center submits their results, including the mobile polling stations inside or close to collective shelters, the ISEC will conduct the verification procedures and announce preliminary and/or final results within the timeframes defined in the regulations.

Sub-National Electoral Administration

The sub-national electoral administration will be done at the level of Syria's 14 governorates that will be in charge of administering municipal elections in Syria's 64 districts. The administration will be done by Interim Governorate Electoral Commission (IGEC), who shall follow instructions and be under direct the supervision of the ISEC. The composition of the IGECs will be decided by the ISEC upon UN vetting and will aim to reflect ethno-sectarian composition of the population in a given governorate. During the selection process, ISEC will question the commissioners on their professional experience, their partisan inclination and independence. Following the approval from the ISEC and vetting by the UN, all staff members at the IGECs will undergo series of trainings facilitated by the ISEC and potentially delivered jointly with the experts of NDI, IRI and IFES. IGECs on the other hand will have the authority to administer the elections at the municipal and governorate level under direct guidance and supervision of the ISEC. The number of seats per municipality will be determined by

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[31] International Idea: "*Electoral Management Design: International IDEA Handbook*" Pdf. Pg. 266

ISEC and based on the updated voters list; the ISEC will facilitate adding of additional seats to reflect the approximate number of population[32].

<u>Voting Modalities Expected to be Administered by the ISEC (IDPs, Refugees, People with Disabilities)</u>

Given the large internal displacement of population inside Syria and large number of Syrian refugees in Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan arrangements will need to be made to allow for refugee and IDP voting. The IDP voting administration will be done by the IGECs under close supervision and guidance by the ISEC. Due to the lack of capacities of the Syrian state, following the civil war, election-day arrangements for people with disabilities and those left disabled during the last war will be provided by the UN who in close cooperation with members of IGECs in governorates will facilitate a door-to-door voting for the voters unable to leave their locations. Mobile polling stations will also be set-up inside or close to shelters throughout Syria.

The refugee voting administration will be facilitated by international organizations, and the key partner in this undertaking will be the International Organization for Migration (IOM) under ISEC oversight. Since 1996, IOM has conducted voter registration and balloting services to more than two million refugees in different parts of the world[33] and will be highly engaged in providing similar services to the four largest Syrian refugee camps. The operation headquarters will be based in Jordan and the preparations will need to take process as soon as possible in order to provide polling services for everyone. Given the complexity of the process and limited timeframes, IOM will also partner with IFES who will send a body of election experts to put together a strategy for out of country vote. IOM will also seek to closely partner with the host countries by initiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will allow for voting procedures to start. Refugee voting services will be provided through 10 field offices and about 200 international staff will be deployed and recruited. Field offices will hire core local staff in Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan for the duration of the program and will recruit a larger group of registration and polling station workers employed and trained over a short period of time and during Election Day[34].

<u>The Electoral Justice</u>

In absence of a consolidated and impartial judiciary, the ISEC will include a separate body in charge of Election Dispute Hearing and Resolution (EDHR).   The EDHR will be a mixed ad hoc body consisting of international experts (appointed by the UN) and local experts (appointed by the ISEC)[35]. This ad-hoc body will be temporary in nature and will handle complaints and appeals arising from this municipal election and constituent assembly elections to take place in around one year after. Following the

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[32] A similar model has been followed in the 2013 governorate elections in Iraq. http://www.ifes.org/~/media/Files/Publications/White%20PaperReport/2013/FAQ%20GCE%20-%20Iraq_FINAL.pdf

[33] International Organization for Migration: *Support to the Enfranchisement of Displaced Population* http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/mepmm/op_support/esu_press_080107.pdf

[34] A.C.E. *Out of Country Vote in Post-Conflict Elections;* The case of Afghanistan 2004 and Iraq 2005 elections http://aceproject.org/today/feature-articles/out-of-country-voting-in-post-conflict-elections

[35] International Idea: *Electoral Justice* EDR systems entrusted to an ad-hoc body Pdf. Pg 78 http://www.idea.int/publications/electoral_justice/upload/inlay-Electoral-Justice.pdf

constitutional referendum, the EDHR will advance into a professional, independent and permanent body composed of local judges.

Other Institutions' Role in the Electoral Process

In order to provide voter education, and therefore increase voter turnout, the international community (primarily IFES and NDI) will facilitate a training-of-trainers program for the local community groupings and a few independent NGOs who have provided service to community in the last war. The community of universities and academics could be one potential partner to receive training on voter education and election observation who will travel around Syria to deliver educational services on voting procedures and who will be monitoring the polling on Election Day.

Section 5: Electoral System

Why does the electoral system matter?

An electoral system is a powerful tool of building a state and promoting civil society capacity. It is not simply a way to elect a president or a parliament once in several years. In fact, the electoral system could contribute to either promoting democracy or to deepening the authoritarian regime. Depending on specific aspects that are included into the electoral system it could provide incentives for emerging new leaders and increasing country's efficiency. On the other hand, it could also lead to the ossification of political institutions. This is why it is very important to determine core strategic objectives before designing specific parts of the electoral system.

There is no simple answer on a question what electoral system is the best. Indeed, one can barely find two countries that have absolutely identical electoral systems. Countries differ by structure of a society, history, social traditions, a role of religion, a fact of being a colony, existence of any kind of conflicts inside the country or with neighbors, and even geographical circumstances. All these factors undoubtedly affect what specific form of electoral systems fits a current country's needs.

The objectives of the electoral system should represent interests of a whole society and its groups of interests, the state itself underscoring its capacity building, and also embody individuals' needs. Taking to account these three stakeholders we can determine the list of core objectives that could be achieved or significantly contributed to by an appropriate electoral system design.

Fair representation of the society. Indeed, the electoral system and elections that are conducted according to it is meaningless if it does not provide representation of a society in an elected body. In practical terms this means that the president should be elected directly or indirectly by a majority of population and seats in a legislature should be distributed proportionally according to the vote. Another words, a parliament should be to some extent a "mirror" of the society. Additional efforts should be made to make sure that minorities and women are not underrepresented.

Reconciliation of the society. This objective is particularly important for post-conflict territories and countries. Additional incentives for reconciliation could be provided by proper design of the electoral system. On the other hand, poor design could encourage restoration and deepening of a conflict.

Building political parties and encouraging pluralism. This is a crucial objective especially for a country that is in transition from an authoritarian regime. Strong parties that represent different groups of interests and are based on different ideological principles guarantee that no group is unrepresented in political discussion. As a result, strong opposition is likely to emerge in such circumstances. This would provide an opportunity for oversight of government activities and increase accountability. Contrary, neglecting of this objective in some cases of transition could simply lead to switching the ruling party and continue the authoritarian regime, as it for example happened in some countries in Central Asia after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Increase the electoral participation and "power" of elections. It is easy to imagine territories that do not have a strong tradition of powerful elections. In some cases people simply do not trust the elections' results because it is widely known that election fraud has taken place constantly before.

Increase of government efficiency and capability. The electoral system might also contribute to stability, efficiency and capability of the government. For instance, different forms of the electoral system could either increase or decrease the chance of creation of a stable majority in a legislature.

International recognition. Sometimes it is necessary for a country to improve its international perception as a democratic state. It could be also reflected in the electoral system design. In particular, more attention could be paid on "international standards" of conducting elections, a role of international observers etc.

All of stated objectives are undoubtedly relevant crucial for post-conflict Syria as well. The electoral system that is discussed below is designed based on these objectives.

The form of government

Traditionally Syria has been a unitary state. Its territory is divided into fourteen governorates. A central government appoints a governor in each governorate. In turn, the governor appoints officials at district level. Such vertical model of ruling the country has allowed the Assad regime to concentrate power in the country and to control the local authorities. This was one of the reasons of recent unrest and civil war.

There is also justification for creation a federation. In fact, there are several territories where strong and well-organized ethnic and religious groups constitute majority. In particular, the Kurdish minority lives densely in the northeastern part of Syria, the Alawites concentrate on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea between Turkey and Lebanon, the Druze community lives primarily on the south west of a country (see map 1 below[36]). Assad, who represents the Alawites, largely relied on support of their community, which made other, underrepresented groups dissatisfied. Therefore, there are expectations that situation in Syria would be more stable if minorities get more power on the territories they densely live in.

Taking to account all pros and cons, a unitary state is more appropriate and preferable form of governing in post-conflict Syria for following reasons:

1. It reflects national traditions of a functioning state.

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[36] Cole, Juan. "Top Ten things Americans need to Know about Syria if they're going to Threaten to Bomb." Amity Indians, September 12, 2013.
http://www.amityindians.com/Archives/September/10ThingsAboutSyria.html (accessed December 9, 2013).

2. It would strengthen unity of Syria as a state and encourage political discussion within a country.
3. The real distribution of ethnic and religious groups is much more complicated (see map 2[37]).
4. It would diminish a risk of further conflicts and violence on ethnic ground within a governorate since governorates would have less power.

At the same time a question of granting some form of autonomy could be raised as part of political agreement and a condition for successful reconciliation. But it should be a matter of national consensus and it needs to be reflected in a national constitution, which would be adopted by a national referendum.
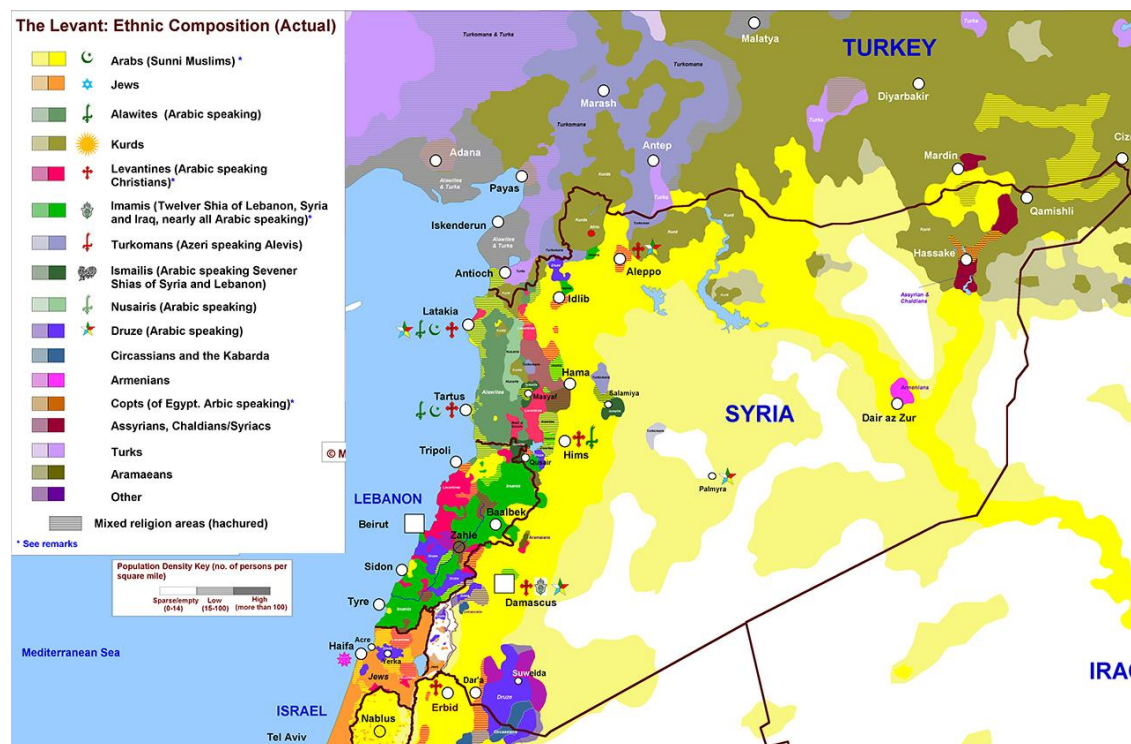
Instead there should be concentration on significant decentralization and empowering local authorities. Basic people's needs and providing most necessary public services (such as education, healthcare, utilities, transportation) are the issues that are common in all areas regardless of ethnic and religious differences. Therefore, it would encourage people to look for common decisions, work closely together and contribute to reconciliation process in Syria. Also, providing needed resources and power to local authorities instead of governorates would lead creation of powerful civil society and building trust to government since local authorities provide services that are the most tangible for people.

The election of the President and the Constituent Assembly

The President should be elected by direct absolute majority popular vote. If no candidate wins 50% of votes a second round should be conducted. Two top-candidates should be included to the ballot for the

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[37] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/08/27/the-one-map-that-shows-why-syria-is-so-complicated/

second round (majority run-off system). A president is elected for a 5-year term with a limit of two terms successively. However, it is not recommended to conduct the presidential elections until the new constitution is adopted.

A Constituent Assembly (CA) should also be elected by direct vote. It is recommended to keep current number of seats – 250. The elections to the CA should be conducted twelve months after the signing the peace agreement.

Elections to the CA should be conducted using the PR closed-list model. Despite this system's drawbacks (fewer options for voters compared to open-list system, discrimination against those who are not member of any party, weak connection between representatives and local voters) its benefits are more important in post-conflict Syria. In particular, closed-list PR system has following advantages:

1. It assures the highest level of proportionality and fairness of representation.
2. It is very simple system both for voters and for authorities that are responsible for conducting elections.
3. It provides more opportunities and guarantees for women and minorities.
4. Displaced people's interests are represented more efficiently.

A majoritarian system is not recommended since it cannot provide fair representation of a society. Dominance of one group over another should be avoided by all means. Therefore, the majoritarian system is not acceptable.

There should be no formal threshold. This "natural threshold" (like in Iraq in 2005) will provide fair representation of the society in the CA. The more political groups get seats, the lower is the chance that any group will be dissatisfied. Even though there is a risk that the CA will be very diversified and polarized, we still believe that the natural threshold will be more beneficial for post-conflict Syria since it will promote a democratic discussion and compromise among all political players.

A decision on whether Syria should have a presidential, parliamentary or mixed system is a crucial one for Syrian government stability. Taking to account a structure of society, history and a fact of the recent war we believe that the presidential power should be significantly diminished. First, there is a risk that a newly elected president who represents the opposition could continue the authoritarian rule and even could start revengeful policy. Second, increased role of the parliament would encourage political dialogue among all political forces.

The system of sub-national governance

Significant decentralization and empowering of municipal councils with resources and real authority should be the first priority of restoring normal functioning of the country. This is crucial for ensuring that basic services are provided to people, and to start restoring the infrastructure, and allocating potential foreign humanitarian aid.

Current administrative division into governorates and districts should be kept until the new constitution is adopted by the referendum.

Local elections in different districts might be run not simultaneously depending on the local security threats and the level of infrastructural capability in each specific district. A cycle of elections for all interim municipal councils should be run within six months after the signing of the peace agreement.

Closed-list proportional system should be used on all municipal councils elections. Each council should consist of 5 to 9 members depending on the population of the district. Individual candidates are also allowed to participate in the municipal elections. The next elections to the municipal councils should be conducted after the new constitution is adopted by the referendum.

Elections to the governorates councils should be conducted simultaneously with the elections to the CA under the same closed-list PR system. Before the elections the interim governors that are appointed by the transitional government should administer governorates.

Representation of minorities and women

Minorities' interests will be protected by:

- no threshold;
- pure closed-list proportional system itself;
- one national-level constituency for the national election.

It is believed that this combination of rules and regulations will provide the best environment for the minorities to be represented in all councils and a Constituent Assembly.

The minorities are not required to register their own parties but are allowed to create a separate party if they want to. Those parties will not have specific status or privileged position.

This model, on the one hand, allows the minorities to be fairly and proportionally represented in all elected bodies and, on the other hand, will provide natural incentive to create parties on political basis rather than ethnic or group interests.

An electoral law should include a requirement for parties to include representatives of each gender to their lists. On the governorate councils and CA elections each 10 positions in the party list should contain at least 3 women candidates ("zipper quota"). It is expected that approximately 80 women will win seats in the Constituent Assembly.

Section 6: Political Party System

To understand the political groupings in Syria is not an easy task. The country has a myriad of ethnic and religious groups. For this reason, before addressing the political party system it is helpful to know a little about those groups.

<u>Existing Political groupings</u>

The ethnic diversity that existed before the Assad era was restrained by its strong regime, which paradoxically worked to keep these groups divided trough "sectarian, ethnic, regional and, increasingly, social cleavages"[38]. However, the long opposition to the official regime allowed the rising of many other different groups. Among these groups there are armed and violent factions and there are also grassroots groups formed by civil society under the name of local coordination committees (LCC). These groups have a great significance to the embryonic political system; although they do not have a centralized organization and are not subordinated to any other committee, they have an aggregating nationalist ideal. They were shaping and organizing the development of civil society. They cannot be mistaken with the CSOs (civil society organizations) which have a top-down origin emptied of political content and "under strict regime tutelage"[39].

These grassroots groups developed a new public space and faced the Ba'ath party supremacy. They organized the protests and documented the day-by-day of the Syrian opposition. Likewise, they generated "networks of solidarity that had never existed before".[40] In some cities the LCCs activists gave support to armed groups sharing a common goal. Conversely, in some other cities armed groups were accused of converting the new civil society realm into a contentious zone. Sometimes LCCs and FSA's goals are not the same, because the first group focuses on the civilian protection and the second one on military gains. The lack of coordination among the groups resulted in misunderstanding within the community. This lack of comprehension led to a decline of the legitimacy of the LCCs. In addition, the role of the LCCs has weakened a lot because of the lack of money caused by the political atmosphere. Without civic support, less reliable groups, which mean violent armed groups, are able to fill the gap.

The shape of the different ethnic groups had changed in Syria during the Assad period. The Arabs, which were the main group, remain almost the same until today; they had increased just a little bit. The Kurdish population, however, had diminished by 20%. Actually they were replaced by a new category, which is the Kurds-Arabized, which are 19% of the population. The Turk-man and the Assyrian remain the same. There is another new group, the Farsi. Chart[41] 1 shows this variation on the Syrian ethnic population.

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[38] Khoury, D. 2013. Losing the Syrian Grassroots – Local governance structures urgently need support. SWP Comments. Retrieved from http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2013C09_kou.pdf.

[39] Khoury

[40] Khoury

[41]Kurdistan National Assembly - Syria
http://www.kurdnas.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=488:will-there-be-room-for-kurds-and-other-minorities-in-a-post-assad-syria&catid.

Syria's Ethnics

1958	Percent
Arabs	56%
Kurds	35%
Turk-man	2%
Assyrian	2%
Armenian	1%
Farsi	0%
Others	4%
Total	**100%**

Syria's Ethnic 1958

- Arabs
- Kurds
- Turk-man
- Assyrian
- Armenian
- Farsi
- Others
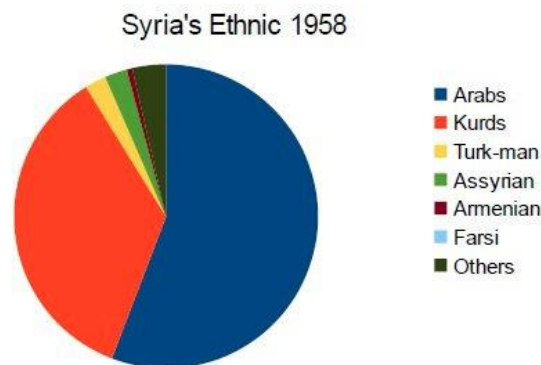
Syria's Ethnics

2010	Percent
Arabs	57%
Kurds	15%
Kurds- Arabized	19%
Turk-man	2%
Assyrian	2%
Armenian	0%
Farsi	1%
Others	4%
Total	**100%**

Syria's Ethnic 2010

- Arabs
- Kurds
- Kurds- Ara
- Turk-man
- Assyrian
- Armenian
- Farsi
- Others
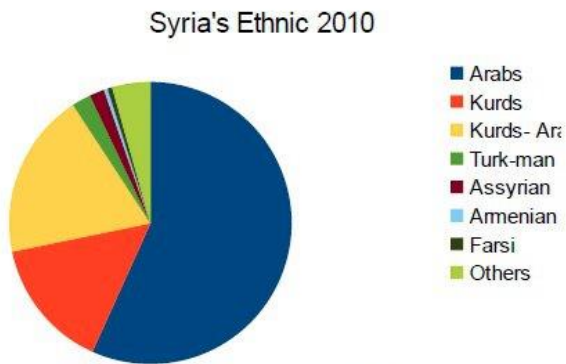
Chart 1

In addition to the ethnic divisions, there is the religious diversity. Chart[42] 2 provides the necessary explanations.

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[42] Syrian ethno-religious groups statistics derive from Nikolaos van Dam. The struggle for power in Syria: Politics and Society under Assad and the Ba'ath Party (New York; LB. Tauris & Co. Ltda. 2011, corroborated by the US State Department. Retrieved from http://cafe.comebackalive.com/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=58080.
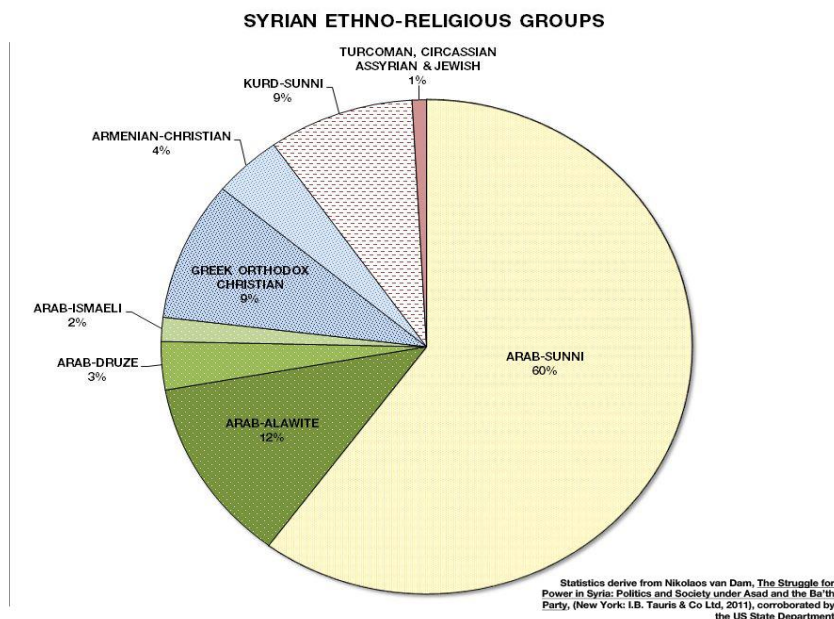
SYRIAN ETHNO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS

TURCOMAN, CIRCASSIAN ASSYRIAN & JEWISH 1%
KURD-SUNNI 9%
ARMENIAN-CHRISTIAN 4%
GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN 9%
ARAB-ISMAELI 2%
ARAB-DRUZE 3%
ARAB-ALAWITE 12%
ARAB-SUNNI 60%

Statistics derive from Nikolaos van Dam, The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba'th Party, (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011), corroborated by the US State Department

Chart 2

The Ba'ath Party

The Ba'ath Party has been the leading party since the Assad family is in power, in 1963. "The party combined pan-Arab nationalism, anti-imperialism and socialism into a distinct secular ideology that was particularly appealing to the lower-middle classes and marginalized communities". [43] In 1970, Hafez al-Assad performed a fruitful coup and replaced the collective leadership of the party by his authoritarian regime highly armed. Since then political life had remained only on Ba'ath Party.

Opposition Groups

The Syria Transition Roadmap[44] explains the origin of the opposition groups: "The political opposition – which, like the regime, was completely taken by surprise by the revolution – started organizing its ranks after decades of absence, whether in prisons or in exile. The unification of its ranks took a long and arduous route and often did not succeed. The opposition held its first conference on June 1, 2011, in Antakya, Turkey, under the title 'Syrian Conference for Change', in which three hundred Syrian

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[43]Briscoe, I., Jansen F., and Smits R. Stability and economic recovery after Assad. *Conflict Research Unit*. Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relation. November, 2012. Retrieved from Bookshttp://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20121100_syria_stability_recovery_cru.pdf.

[44] Syria Transition Roadmap (2013). Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies. Washington D.C.

opposition members participated. The goal was to find ways to support the Syrian revolution internally and to ensure its continuation".[45]

Each one of the groups presented on this paper is an umbrella for several other groups. At the same time that these groups assemble they can disassemble; they come and go according to the development of the conflict, of the political environment, and of the fast-changing alliances.

1. SNC – Syrian National Council

It is the first opposition umbrella group. It was created in October 2011 comprising all the political trends; "liberals, members of the Muslim Brotherhood, local coordination committees, Kurds, and Assyrians".[46]

This group lost its credibility because it took a long time to define its positions about armed uprising and Western military intervention. In addition, there was the sense that the Muslim Brotherhood was behind the decisions of the group. [47]

According to SNC website[48], the group is committed to:

- Working to overthrow the regime using all legal means
- Affirming national unity among all components of Syrian society (e.g., Arabs and Kurds, as well as ethnic, religious, and sectarian groups) and rejecting all calls for ethnic strife
- Safeguarding the non-violent character of the Syrian Revolution
- Protecting national independence and sovereignty, and rejecting foreign military intervention (SNC).

2. National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces

It was formed in November 2012, with the goal to expand the political opposition base and fill the gaps left by SNC. The "power within the Coalition has been concentrated within three political blocs. One, led by Mustafa Sabbagh, a businessman considered close to Qatar, includes most 'local council' representatives. A second is dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, which comprises secular figures and other Islamists and has proven flexible in its external alliances. The third, led by Michel Kilo, a veteran opposition intellectual, coalesced in June 2013, after the Coalition admitted additional secular figures as part of an expansion to 114 members. This bloc benefits from Saudi support".[49]

The NCS' website states its principles, which are:

- Absolute national sovereignty and independence for Syria

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[45] Syria Transition Roadmap, 2013, p. 45
[46] Syria Transition Roadmap, 2013, p. 45
[47] International Crisis Group. "Anything but politics: The state of Syria's political opposition." 2013. Crisis Group Middle East Report n. 146, October. Retrieved from http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/egypt-syria-lebanon/syria/146-anything-but-politics-the-state-of-syria-s-political-opposition.aspx.
[48] Syrian National Council, "About SNC" http://www.syriancouncil.org/en/about.html

[49] International Crisis Group

- Preservation of the unity of the Syrian people
- Preservation of the unity of the country and its cities
- Overthrowing the Syrian regime and dismantling the security forces and holding responsible parties accountable for crimes against the Syrian people
- Not to engage in any dialogue or negotiations with the regime
- Uphold our commitment for a civil democratic Syria[50]

The Arab League, followed by the United State (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), and the European Union (EU) considered NCS the 'representative of aspirations of Syrian People'. However, on September 2013, 13 major groups including al-Qaeda-linked groups rejected the authority of this umbrella group.

3. National Coordination Body for the Forces of Democratic Change

This group was formed in June 2011, by leftist, nationalist, and Kurdish parties. In addition, personalities also joined it. Its goal was to be an alternative to the Coalition and the former SNC. However, this group has a feature: it is radically against armed rebellion and the Western military intervention. The group does not really aim for the fall of the regime; their goal is a democratic change.

The National Coordination Body for the Forces of Democratic Change does not have strong support of the opposition groups.[51]

Military Groups

1. Free Syrian Army

It was formed in August, 2011, by defectors based in Turkey. Civilians and Islamists militants had joined them. The group is poorly armed and most of its components have only basic military training. BBC news says "a growing number of defections, partly caused by sectarian division, is weakening the military, strengthening the FSA and increasing the violence. The army's rank and file is largely Sunni while its leadership is mainly Alawite" (BBC 2013).

Like any other group in Syria, Free Syrian Army has also many subdivisions. Generally its groups are formed by defected soldiers and civilians from lower economic classes. "Their legitimacy is derived mainly from their role as the protectors of the revolutionary street, especially in the absence of international protection. The state's weakness in rural areas gave legitimacy to the local tribal leaders who first led protests against the regime, and later headed local FSA divisions".[52]

2. Al-Nusra Front or Jabhat al-Nusra

It is a powerful jihadist group, which claimed responsibility for several attacks in Syria's main cities. Its aim is to establish an Islamic emirate in Syria. It seems to be the most aggressive and successful rebel force. It was designated by the United States and other countries as a terrorist organization.

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[50] National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces website http://www.etilaf.org/en/about-us/principles.html.
[51] International Crisis Group
[52] Khoury

3. The New Islamic Front

It is claimed to have "tens of thousands of fighters, potentially making it the largest rebel force in Syria"[53] if all the opposition groups are counted. The purpose of the group is to set up a Islamic state. It "incorporates Jaish al-Islam, which was formed in September, as well as the powerful Tawheed Brigade and the Salafist Ahrar al-Sham. It is an "independent political, military and social formation" bloc with the aim to face the Assad regime and build an Islamic state.[54] It notably does not include the al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra".[55] The military forces can be better understood with the map[56] and Table 3[57] below:
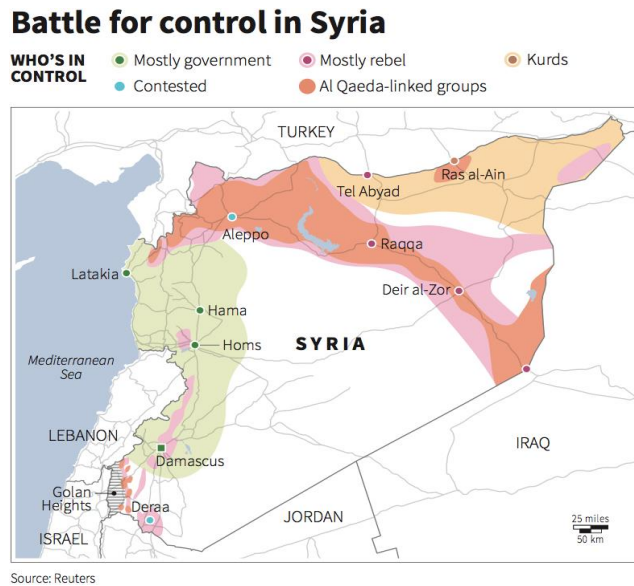
Figure 3

[53] Morris, L. Seven Islamist Syrian rebel groups unify to form Islamic Front. (2013, November, 2013). *The Washington Post*, p. A14.

[54] Morris

[55] Morris

[56] Kelley, Michael "Here's The Extremist-To-Moderate Spectrum Of The 100,000 Syrian Rebels" http://www.businessinsider.com/graphic-the-most-accurate-breakdown-of-the-syrian-rebels-2013-9

[57] The Economist, "Who's Who in Syria's Battlefield" http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2013/05/daily-chart-12

Who's who in Syria's battlefield

Key rebel groups, their leaders and ideology

Name	Leader	Aims
Main fronts:		
Supreme Military Command (SMC)	General Salim Idriss, a defector	Set up in December 2012 under the Syrian National Coalition in an effort to unite rebels backed by Western and Arab Gulf governments. Has limited control on the ground
Syrian Islamic Front	Collective leaders' council: chair is Abu Abdullah al-Hamawi	Syrian Islamists. Includes Ahrar al-Sham and other Salafist groups. Co-operates with SMC
Syrian Liberation Front	Sheikh Ahmed Issa, head of Saqour al-Sham	Coalition of Islamist groups. Independent of mainstream fighters, but works closely with them. Some leaders sit on SMC
Fighting groups:		
Jabhat al-Nusra	Abu Muhammad al-Golani	Salafist jihadists with a global vision of an Islamist state. Mainly foreign leadership, Syrian soldiers. Linked to al-Qaeda
Ahrar al-Sham	Abu Abdel Rahman al-Suri, Abu Abdullah al-Hamawi, Abu Ayman (political leader)	Salafist jihadists with national aims. Co-operate with other groups. Strongest component of Syrian Islamic Front
Farouq Battalions	Osama Sayeh al-Jinidi	A mixed bunch, ranging from devout to mild Islamists. Started in Homs, now nationwide; includes Farouq al-Shamal in the north. Controls some border crossings
Liwa al-Tawhid	Abdulkader Saleh (Haj Marea)	Umbrella force in Aleppo, included in the Syrian Liberation Front. Its leader sits on the SMC
Saqour al-Sham	Sheikh Ahmed Issa	Most powerful fighting force in Idleb. Islamist. Its leader heads the Syrian Liberation Front
Ansar al-Islam	Abu Moaz al-Agha	Umbrella for Islamist factions around Damascus, including powerful Liwa al-Islam
Ahfad al-Rasul	Ziad Haj Obeid	Part of Ansar al-Islam in Damascus, where it has carried out assassinations; also has offshoot in Idleb
Ghurabaa	Omar Hilal	Islamist group with growing presence in Aleppo and Raqqa; works with all other groups
Democratic Union Party (PYD)	Salih Muslim	Syrian offshoot of Turkey's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Neither with the regime nor with the rebels. Its militias control Kurdish areas in north-east Syria

Sources: Institute for the Understanding of War; *The Economist*

Forming Political Parties

When the time of transition comes, the shaping of the political party system is one of the most important things to take care. It is this system what will support the new democracy. Reilly and Reynolds have an important lesson about it[58]: "Scholars and policy makers alike have typically given too much attention to social forces and not enough to the careful crafting of appropriate democratic institutions by which those forces can be expressed. As Larry Diamond has argued, 'the single most important and urgent factor in the consolidation of democracy is not civil society but political institutionalization'. To survive, democracies in developing countries need above all 'robust political institutions' such as secure executives and effective legislatures composed of coherent, broadly based parties encouraged by aggregative electoral institutions.[59]

Although the countless opposition forces and the LCCs (local coordination committees) grassroots in Syria, the country has an immature political society. Since the Assad era, Syria has a historical suppression and exclusion of political parties activities. The Syria Transition Roadmap describes the socio-political environment in the country: "Syrian political society lacks basic political tools, such as

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[58] Reilly, B. and Reynolds A. 1999. Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies. Papers on International Conflict Resolution. Washington D.C. National Academy Press. Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9434.html.
[59] Reilly and Reynolds, p. 7

political parties and professional political groups. In addition, it will face new challenges to the process of building a modern state, the final product of the political reform process. Syrian society also lacks a culture of political participation – especially with regard to woman and the members of other vulnerable groups, who rarely appear in civil society, such as trade unions and associations forums. This points to the fact that society is not prepared to undertake real and meaningful reform".[60]

A political party law to Syria should allow the rising of political ideas. In general ethnic and religious ideas should not be a component to political parties. Carothers (as cited by Janda) says political parties should have the role of "(1) aggregating and articulating the interests of the citizens; (2) structuring electoral competition and shaping the political landscape; and (3) providing coherent political groups to run the government" [61]. Yet, Stepan has a different point; he says, "No group in civil society – including religious groups – can a priori be prohibited from forming a political party. Constraints on political parties may only be imposed after a party, by its actions, violates democratic principles". [62]

As this paper showed, politics in Syria is deeply mixed with religion. In politics countries do not draft the ideal type of laws they need; they do what is possible, they have the result of the achieved consensus. That is why Carothers said that the parties in developing countries "cannot be understood as simply or underdeveloped or weak; they are fundamentally different kinds of organization than Western ones".[63] In addition, an ethnic and religious fragmented society as the Syrian has to have the freedom for religious political parties especially because religion has a very important role in the Middle East. They will probably have a very fragmented political party system, but inclusiveness is essential; the new regime should ensure a multiparty system in order that each group can feel itself represented, otherwise people will not feel like being in a democracy.

However, Syria should proscribe two types of political parties; terrorist linked groups and armed groups. An armed group would never discuss ideas and would never be democratic. It will impose its will by force. Allowing these groups to form political parties is like accepting to be the dictatorship of terror or to replace an authoritarian regime by another one. The New Islamic Group, for instance, did not include in its group the al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra.[64]

Thus, the Syrian political party law should ensure:

- Except for terrorist and army groups, and lawful activities, Syrians have the right to freely create political parties
- There will be no gender, ethnic or religious distinction to be a member of a political party

[60] Syria Transition Roadmap, p. 70
[61] Janda, K. 2005. Political parties and democracy in theoretical and practical perspective – adopting party law. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs – NDI. Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://www.ndi.org/node/13516.
[62] Entelis, J. 2005. The democratic imperative vs. the authoritarian impulse: the maghrib state between transition and terrorism. *Middle East Journal*. vol. 59, n. 04, p. 537/558.
[63] Janda
[64] Morris

- All the governorates of the country are allowed to form political parties with national identity. To reach this level the political party should have a minimum number of signatures, which this paper suggests 2000 signatures from at least 5 governorates
- All the political parties are allowed to effectively participate in the ruling country
- The political party will assist in the formulation and expression of the popular will
- Disclosure relating to the representative properties in order to avoid embezzlement
- Political party activities cannot be suspended except by judicial order
- How is going to be the access of the political party to the media.

Regarding to internal organization the Political Party Law should also contain the following requirements:

- The manifesto of the political party and the public police formulation
- The political party's internal organization must be according to democratic principles and transparency; with rules about periodic election of the principal officers and members of the executive committee
- Guidelines about inter-party interaction
- Rules for selecting the party candidates
- Registration of the party in the Election Commission with the name of the party, the name and address of the members of its executive committee, and any other adjustment of these data
- Rules about membership charging fees
- Rules about fundraising or corporate donations
- Rules about individual donations
- The permission or not of volunteer efforts in case the income is not enough for hiring employees
- Disclosure about the party property and its accounts.

All in all, Syria has a great variety of ethnic and religious groups. Although the Assad era suppressed political pluralism, the Syrian society remained diverse. There are Arabs, Kurds, Turk-man, Assyrian, Armenian, and Farsi among others. The multiplicity of religious groups makes society even more fragmented; there are Arab-Sunnis, Arab-Alawites, Arab-Druzes, Arab-Israelis, Greek Orthodox Christians, Armenian-Christians, Kurd-Sunnis and others. The significance of religion in the Middle East society shapes different behaviors and different believes for each group. These differences preclude the melting of these groups.

On the other hand, the long resistance to the Assad's regime allowed the rising of many political groups. Although these groups have no political experience and many of them are violent, there are some grassroots movements, like the local coordination committee, that had emerged without religion ideology and do have legitimacy.

The political groupings and the umbrella groups are volatile because of the ethnic and religious variety, and as a result of the evolution of the conflict. For instance, when the Syrian National Council lost its credibility as the political forces moved toward another direction founding the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition.

When the conflict in Syria is over, the transition government should be aware on the shaping of the political institutionalization. A democratic government should ensure the possibility of different political aggregation. The diversity of ethnic and religious ideas should be accepted, but army and terrorist groups should not be allowed to form a political party. The political party law should ensure the formulation and expression of the popular will and the activities of the political parties. Regarding to the organization of the political parties the law should safeguard the democratic principles and transparency. The respect to all these principles is the path to an effective transition to democracy.

Section 7: Electoral Security

Threats

There will be various threat scenarios against electoral facilities, stakeholders, supplies, and information leading up to, during, and after the election. Some of the most likely threats include bombings, shootings and physical violence, voter, candidate and election worker intimidation, destruction and obstruction of voting locations and election material, and other typical means of electoral malpractice and threat scenarios in a post conflict environment.

These threats are all possible due to different situational realities on the ground. There will be an abundance of guns and heavy weaponry throughout Syria. In addition, insurgents may have resources and means to use bombs or other terrorist attacks. Roads are damaged and have been fiercely fought over. Transportation of election material and personnel will be a concern, as well as the ability of voters to travel to voting locations. With these considerations in mind a strong electoral security force will need to be ready to face these challenges. Electoral security is defined as "the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities, and events."[65] Electoral security will need to be present during each phase of the electoral cycle. Electoral violence can occur at different phases of the electoral cycle – pre-election, Election Day, and post-election.[66] The following is the disaggregated threat analysis for each phase of the electoral cycle based on the factors stated above.

Pre-Election Violence

Threats and conflict can emerge during voter registration in the pre-election phase. Stina Larserud states, "the pre-electoral period conflicts are often connected to voter registration processes and their perception as unfair or biased". Of particular concern in Syria will be the registration of returning refugees and IDPs. Jeff Fischer states, "Identity conflict can occur during the registration process when refugees or other conflict-forced migrants cannot establish or re-establish their officially recognized identities. The result is that these populations can remain disenfranchised and outside of the political process and potentially provoke conflict within the process."[67] In addition, conflicts can occur during campaigning in the lead up to election. Rivals seek to disrupt opponents' campaigns, intimidate voters, candidates and election workers, and use threats and violence to influence voter participation.[68] For example, in the Iraqi provincial elections in April 2013 pre-election violence included targeted attacks that killed 13 candidates and two political party officers. There was also a bombing at an internet cafe that killed 25 which was linked to the provincial elections and competing political parties.[69] Similar threats are likely in Syria. In the Syrian context threats during the pre-Election phase will likely include voter and candidate intimidation by armed militias since they will have access to weapons and will have motivation to either prevent the election from happening or to influence the results in their favor.

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[65] Fischer, Jeff. *Electoral Conflict and Violence: A Strategy for Study and Prevention.* IFES White Papers. IFES, 2002. 3.

[66] Larserud, Stina. "UNDP Guidelines on Prevention of Election Violence." *Aceproject.org*. ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 13 June 2007.

[67] Fischer, 9.

[68] Ibid

[69] Arraf, Jane. "How Stable Is Iraq? 13 Candidates Killed Ahead of Elections." *The Christian Science Monitor*. The Christian Science Monitor, 19 Apr. 2013.

Intimidation could escalate to violent attacks in order to prevent or delay the election, kill candidates, or prevent people from registering or planning to vote.

Election Day Violence

Polling stations are likely to be the most vulnerable locations for violence on election day. This is the phase where outright violent attacks on groups of voters or polling stations will likely be carried out, otherwise known as balloting conflict.[70] This could involve anything from armed militia members confiscating and destroying ballots and polling stations to terrorist attacks and bombings on polling stations on Election Day in order to disrupt the entire electoral process. There is also a risk of supporters of candidates attacking or harassing those who are voting for an opposing candidate.

Post-Election Violence

There could be results conflict after election. If the results of the election are disputed, and these disputes are not answered in a timely or satisfactory manner, violent outbreaks could occur and people could violently reject the entire election as illegitimate. In addition there could also be representation conflict if any group feels that they have lost entirely.[71] If they see the election results as a zero-sum situation that completely shuts them out they may violently attack citizens and elected officials to try and overthrow the newly elected government. The threat actors in the post-election scenario are likely to be armed militants and former pro-Assad supporters. There is also the threat of retaliation against polling areas once the results are revealed.[72]

Geography

There will be certain geographical areas more prone towards electoral violence than others once the conflict is over. Obviously in locations where fighting has been heaviest the threats will be greater. Reportedly ⅓ of all deaths have been in the city of Homs, making it a likely area for high rates of violence and vulnerability to threats. The towns of Deraa, Homs and Hama had a surge of people leave who are now refugees. If refugees return to these locations after the conflict they will be an extremely vulnerable population and the threat scenario is likely to be greater in these areas. Aleppo has high rates of crime and violent fighting and as a major city will also face a high threat risk. Syria's Kurdish areas in the governorate of Al Hasakah in northeastern Syria are another potential area more prone to conflict since the Kurds have faced high rates of violence against them in the past. Damascus has seen high violence and use of chemical weapons, and as a major site with a large population it will be also be prone to violence and conflict. All contested areas where fighting has been highest will likely be more vulnerable to violence and threats.[73]

This map of contested areas (as of August 2013) provided by the BBC provides a good picture of which areas will be more vulnerable and prone to electoral conflict.

Victims, Perpetrators, and Motives

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[70] Fischer, 10.

[71]Ibid

[72] Ibid

[73] "Syria: Mapping the Conflict." *BBC News*. BBC, 5 Sept. 2013.

Perpetrators, Motives and Tactics:

 Electoral conflict can emerge when voters are in conflict with the state because of perceived unfairness in the electoral process, when the state is in conflict with voters who challenge the election results, and when political rivals are in conflict with each other over political gain.[74] The potential perpetrators of electoral violence in the Syria case include political rivals, state actors, citizens, insurgents and extremists, and 'spoilers'.[75] Political rivals will likely include Pro-Assad supporters, former rebels, Islamists, and militias. Pro-Assad supporters and rebels' motives to perpetrate electoral violence will include the political motive to ensure or prevent former or pro-Assad individuals from being elected. Islamists will have the political motive to ensure an Islamist government comes to power. Militias, pro-government forces and rebels will also simply be motivated by revenge against those they have fought against throughout the war. They will also all have access to weapons and thus will have the means to carry out violence.

A specific threat in the Syrian context will be transnational sources of electoral violence such as Hezbollah, Al Qaeda (especially from Iraq), and radical Islamists and transnational insurgents whose goal is to establish an Islamist state in Syria. As the Syrian resistance has become increasingly radicalized throughout the war, Aleppo and the rebel-controlled North have had heavy involvement by the Islamic State of Iraq, al Qaeda's branch in Iraq. At the same time many militias consist of both local fighters and foreign fighters, mostly from Hezbollah and Iran. In particular pro-regime militias have Farsi-speaking advisers with them and are heavily influenced by Iran.[76]

The tactics of these potential perpetrators will likely include violence and harassment against electoral personnel, transportation infrastructure, and election materials to disrupt and prevent the electoral process. Violence and intimidation against individuals to prevent or coerce votes is also likely, especially in the vulnerable areas identified above. There may be violence or assassination attempts against candidates, as well as 'indiscriminate' mass violence at polling stations on Election Day or at sites of any protests or large gatherings. Terrorist tactics, such as suicide bombers, will also be a concern and could be used to attack registration or polling stations before or on Election Day to prevent or delay the election.

State and citizen actors could also be involved in threat scenarios. If citizens see the election as unfair, fixed, or illegitimate they may act out violently. Conversely, the State may be faced with citizens challenging or not accepting legitimate election results. Both of these situations would provide motivation for the State and citizens to engage in violent activity. In State vs citizen threat scenarios, likely tactics include attacks against state actors and infrastructure and organized state violence against citizens. Any conflict between State and citizens will be tense due to the past experience of the use of chemical weapons against Syrian citizens.

Another group who could become perpetrators of electoral violence is business owners. Owners and members of business organizations were previously highly dependent on the regime and benefited from their affiliation with the State. With a new government coming to power these businesses have a lot to

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[74] Fischer, 4.

[75] Ibid

[76] Foust, Joshua. "The War After the War in Syria." *Defense One*. National Journal Group, Inc, 26 Aug. 2013.

lose since they will lose their favorable treatment and economic standing. The loss of favorable treatment by government officials could motivate them to either engage in intimidation or other strategies to try and get pro-business individuals elected. Tactics could include using violence and threats leading up to Election Day in order to try and coerce people into voting in a certain way, or by pressuring people at polling stations. However, not all Syrian businesses have the same affiliation towards the regime. Jihad Yazigi states, "The position of Syria's businessmen towards the uprising is based on a number of factors including their closeness to, or dependence for the conduct of their business on, the circles of power; the size of their business outside Syria and the autonomy this gives them towards the regime; the impact on their business of government economic policy in the last decade; as well as their sectarian, geographic or ethnic affiliations."[77] In addition, due to the increasing and serious violence and destruction, especially to the cities of Damascus and Aleppo where the business community initially remained more supportive of the regime, large numbers of business owners have left the country and have tried to establish themselves in neighboring country. It is likely that even when the conflict ends many will never return, and thus they will not be present to act as a threat.[78]

Victims:

The potential victims of electoral violence in Syria include refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), women, Kurds, and other persecuted minorities.

As stated, the towns of Deraa, Homs and Hama had a surge of people leave who are now refugees. When refugees and IDPs return to these locations after the conflict is resolved they will be an extremely vulnerable populations and the threat scenario is likely to be greater in these areas. They will lack resources and stability, making them vulnerable to coercion or outright violence. In addition, IDPs may not be able to return home if their homes have been destroyed in the conflict. IDP camps will likely remain, resulting in concentrated areas of vulnerable populations.

It is recognized that during conflict and in post-conflict environments women face higher risk and remain extremely vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Refugee and IDP women face an even greater risk. These risks can be everything from domestic violence to prevent or coerce a woman's vote to the severe risk women and girls face of rape and sexual harassment when venturing out in public or in areas surrounding IDP camps which would impact their ability to travel to polling stations. There have even been cases of women and girls encountering violence and harassment from peacekeepers and security forces who are supposed to be there to protect them.[79]

The cities of al-Hasakah and Qamishli in the northeastern area of the governorate of al-Hasakah, near the borders with Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan, have emerged as a site of conflict between Arab tribes and Kurds. Several armed groups have actively sought to attack Kurds in and around the ethnically mixed city of Ras al-ʿAyn in the northeastern area of al-Hasakah governorate, along the Turkish border. Pro-

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[77] Yazigi

[78] Ibid

[79] Vlachová, Marie and Lea Biason. "Violence against Women in Armed Conflict and in Post-conflict Situation." *Women in an Insecure World: Violence against Women : Facts, Figures and Analysis*. Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2005. 14-19

government Baggara fighters are also stated to have participated in attacks against the Kurdish Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (PYD - Democratic Union Party) in the ethnically mixed northern Aleppo neighborhood of Sheikh Maqsud. The vulnerability of the Kurdish populations will remain high and there will likely be many threats that impact their ability to participate in the electoral process, especially in ethnically mixed regions such as Aleppo and al-Jazirah. [80]

Security Forces

Security forces will be of vital importance based upon the high threat scenario that will exist in Syria for its first election. Generally, international military forces, international civil police forces, and local security forces can provide electoral security.[81] In this case international and national security forces will need to be utilized to protect the electoral process and participants. One of the largest issues facing security is a "police gap" since there will be a serious lack of adequate local security or police forces within Syria that would be capable of providing security. To address the "police gap" issue, we suggest that the UN mission will have to oversee civilian police (CIVPOL) staffed by police from LAS countries.

International Security Forces:

International involvement in Syria will be a delicate issue due to differing views held in the Security Council. Namely, Russia will likely not support heavy international involvement on the part of the UN. In addition, many people on the ground in Syria, especially Islamist forces, look very unfavorably on international and UN involvement as a form of foreign occupation.[82] However, as illustrated above, the threat scenario in Syria will continue to be extremely high and international involvement in providing security is vital to prevent violent outbreaks.

UN uniformed personnel including UN Police and UN Military personnel routinely carry out patrols to ensure voters can exercise their democratic right without fear of violence in dangerous election scenarios.[83] UN Civilian Police personnel will need to be present in Syria. Russia will have objections to heavy UN involvement, but a limited mandate that restricts UN involvement to only providing security should make their presence more acceptable for Russia. UN CIVPOL will have to be directly responsible for all policing and other law enforcement functions and have a clear authority and responsibility for the maintenance of law and order.

As stated previously, the relationship between UN personnel and Syrian citizens may be tense and could even trigger violence. To help mitigate this UN CIVPOL should reach an arrangement with the LAS for police during the election. This way police forces on the ground may be more acceptable and trusted by citizens.

Training will have to be provided for new recruits who would bolster the numbers, but under a form of UN mentorship and supervision. International training should be provided for new recruits to the UN

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[80] Heras, Nicholas A. and Carole O'Leary. "The Tribal Factor in Syria's Rebellion." *Chaos in Syria 360 Context*. Fair Observer°, 14 July 2013.
[81] Fischer, 5.
[82] Class interview with Sirwan Kajjo and Ahed Al Hendi
[83] "Electoral Assistance." *United Nations Peacekeeping*. United Nations.

CIVPOL. This will involve special curriculum developed on electoral security in post-conflict scenarios. INTERPOL provides police training for such situations. In addition, the Peace Operations Training Institute provides a UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL) Course that is two weeks long that aims to prepare individuals for UNCIVPOL appointments.[84] This could be provided for LAS appointed forces that may need training to prepare for the Syria context.

UN personnel should be focused on areas identified as having a high likelihood of violence and polling stations that will see the most voters. While their mandate may be limited, their ability to use force will not be. In order to have a strong presence and effectively discourage armed violence or terrorist actions they will have to be heavily armed and armored and will need to be prepared for violent attack. Taking into consideration the timing and how much can be expected from the police, as well as the likelihood of recruitment of a new, non-Assad force for the CA elections, there may not be enough of an international force or enough well-trained police forces to provide adequate security for the entire country. UN CIVPOL will be deployed on a mobile basis, on patrol and in a rapid response mode for emergencies, as well as provide security at polling station with a high likelihood of violence. However, protection of some polling stations may be up to local militias and tribal forces.

Domestic Security Forces: Militias

When the conflict in Syria ends the country will be awash in weapons and militia members. Syria's militias will continue to play a role in determining the security of the country. They will exist as potential threats, but some may also play a limited security role. The rising power of anti-regime militias — some of which have ties to al-Qaeda — as well as the fact that many pro-regime militias seem to be acting on their own under very little control is cause for concern. [85] Syria will lack an effective local police force and army with the regime's end and will face the issue that armed militias could destabilize the state. The ultimate goal should be to somehow disarm, demobilize, and reintegrated militias in the country's official structure. This strategy is not unheard of. Libya actually incorporated militias into its electoral security force somewhat successfully. During their elections they employed armed groups to provide security; in Benghazi, for example, the ballots were stored and counted at the headquarters of the city's strongest militia. However, militias now exercise an unhealthy amount of authority and leverage.[86]

In Libya the government utilized militia forces for electoral security. Now there are plans to try to incorporate them into a national guard-type force, until the regular army is bolstered. The prime minister's office has sought to achieve these goals through an initiative called the Warrior's Affairs Commission (WAC). WAC has conducted an exhaustive registration and data collection of nearly 215,000 revolutionary fighters and functions as a sort of placement service, moving young men into the police and the army, sending them on scholarships abroad, furthering their education at home, or giving them vocational training. Jacob Mundy states, "The implied goal of the WAC is to break up the

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[84] "UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL) Course." *The Peace Operations Training Institute*. The Peace Operations Training Institute.

[85] Baker, Aryn. "Syria's Assad May Be Losing Control Over His Deadly Militias." *TIME World*. Time Inc., 11 Sept. 2013.

[86] Wehrey, Frederic. "Libya's Militia Menace: The Challenge After the Elections." *Forgein Affairs*. Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 12 July 2012.

brigades by appealing to individual interest: "We need to appeal to the revolutionaries' ambitions and desire for a better life. We need to tell him that the brigades cannot offer you anything."[87] There has also been a proposal to provide training one month a year for a type of reserve force and men would receive a stipend and medical benefits for themselves and their families. In exchange, they would hand over their heavy weaponry such as artillery, tanks, rockets, and rifles to the Ministry of Defense. There would also be a buy-back program for the fighters' medium-sized weaponry.[88]

Libya has shown that at some levels this system of militia co-option has worked. There were low levels of violence and the elections went off relatively smoothly.[89] Syria could build off of what has worked in Libya (and avoid what has shown to be weaknesses) by taking a dual-track approach of building up the national army and police, focusing especially on training a newer generation of junior and mid-level officers, while bolstering the demobilization and reintegration programs that aim to give young fighters educational and vocational opportunities. However, it is uncertain whether this could ever be achieved due to the extreme divisions and fragmentations among Syria's militias, and it is certain that no regulation or reliable control of the militias could be established in the time frame this scenario places forward for the elections. While the militias should not be relied upon heavily for any sort of widespread national electoral security, incorporating militias into electoral security forces in a very local context could ensure having enough security forces on the ground to prevent threats in areas where militants have very close relationships with the population (so will not be likely to carry out any attacks against them) and where they are invested in protecting their homes and communities. This way some of the smaller, less-vulnerable locations can rely on local forces and the UN CIVPOL forces will be able to focus and be concentrated in large high-risk areas and have enough forces to mobilize and send out in the case of a problem arising.

Domestic Security Forces: Traditional Leaders

When considering domestic security forces it is also important to recognize the informal system of tribal leaders in addition to militias. Tribal leadership and tribal forces have been instrumental throughout the Syrian conflict. Some tribal leaders have issued manifestos against the Asad regime and their followers have formed brigades to defend their neighborhoods and quarters in the front line cities against security forces attacks. Other tribal leaders, particularly those who had close working relationships with the government, as well as those in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, have aligned themselves with the regime. The transnational as well as the local tribes of Syria and Lebanon have become a significant part of the Syrian uprising.[90]

Tribalism remains a primary form of communal identity among Arab Sunnis across Syria in both rural and urban areas. It has shaped the conflict since tribesmen led some of the first demonstrations against

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[87] Ibid

[88] Ibid

[89] Ibid

[90] Chatty, Dawn. "Syrian Tribes, National Politics and the Uprising." *Debating Development*. Oxford Department of International Development, 12 Sept. 2013.

the government. Currently, Syrian Arab tribal groups are active participants in pro- and anti-Assad militias as well as soldiers in the Syrian military. In addition, members of tribally-organized militias are concerned with protecting their tribe and their autonomy from both the Syrian state and the opposition.

Syrian Arab tribes are divided into *qabila* (national and trans-national tribal confederations) and *ashira* (individual tribes). *Ashira* are further divided into *fukhud* (clans), *khums* or *ibn amm* (lineages). Due to the localized nature of the Syrian conflict, Syrian tribal armed groups generally participate in fighting near their home areas.[91] Tribal leadership remains very powerful in their localities where they are concerned with protecting their homes and tribal members. Because of this they could serve as an effective source of local conflict resolution and security within their tribal bases.

Yemen provides an example of how tribal forces can provide security and effectively handle conflicts between various tribes and between tribes and the government. In Yemen tribes have successfully prevented and resolved conflicts over resources, development services, and land, and have sometimes managed to contain revenge-killing cases. Nadwa Al-Dawsari states, "Nationally, tribal mediators have played an important role in promoting political dialogue and building consensus among political groups. During the past year, where government forces withdrew, tribes took responsibility and managed to provide a reasonable level of security within their territories and along the main roads that connect tribal governorates." [92] This example shows that traditional tribal leaders can and do play an important security and law and order role within their areas of influence.

Tribes play an important role in Syria and will continue to do so after the conflict. They may be in a position to provide domestic security and conflict resolution within their areas of influence. However, many tribes clash and have been on all sides of the fighting, so anything on a national scale would be a challenge. Any reliance on tribal and traditional systems to provide security forces in areas where there are tense tribal relations, or where Arab tribes have violently treated Kurds or other neighbors, should be avoided. At the same time a creative solution will be needed to ensure tribal forces become an asset for electoral security and not a potential threat.

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[91] Heras and O'Leary. "The Tribal Factor in Syria's Rebellion."

[92] Nadwa Al-Dawsari. *Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012.

Conclusion

The Syrian people face will confront a host of complex challenges as they overturn decades of authoritarian rule and build representative governance within a fragile security environment. It is imperative that Syrian election authorities, other government officials, and Syrian citizens have a well-conceived plan and timeline to guide this transition process. With a strong ISEC leading the way, it is possible to create a representative, effective, and democratic electoral system in Syria and develop a representative and competitive multi-party system. It will be important, however, for authorities to recognize the flexibility needed to continue to manage the necessary changes and meet the challenges that will arise. Election administration is a constantly changing process that requires consistent information gathering and a sensitivity to the state of the country and its citizens. The international community must remain ready to provide electoral assistance to Syria through election observation, party training, electoral security, and technical assistance as well as greater coordination assistance. A range of non-state actors exists to support and to be consulted in in the process of providing civic education, voter education and outreach, advocacy, and service provision throughout the process. The threats of violence that could undermine electoral security and the entire transition process must be constantly monitored and planned for when moving forward through the transition. With significant, thoughtful planning and considerable coordination it is possible to bring about a successful democratic transition and a post-conflict governance system in Syria which maximizes representation and participation for its people.

Appendix 1: Syrian Constitutional Timeline

<u>Pre-Independence</u>[93]

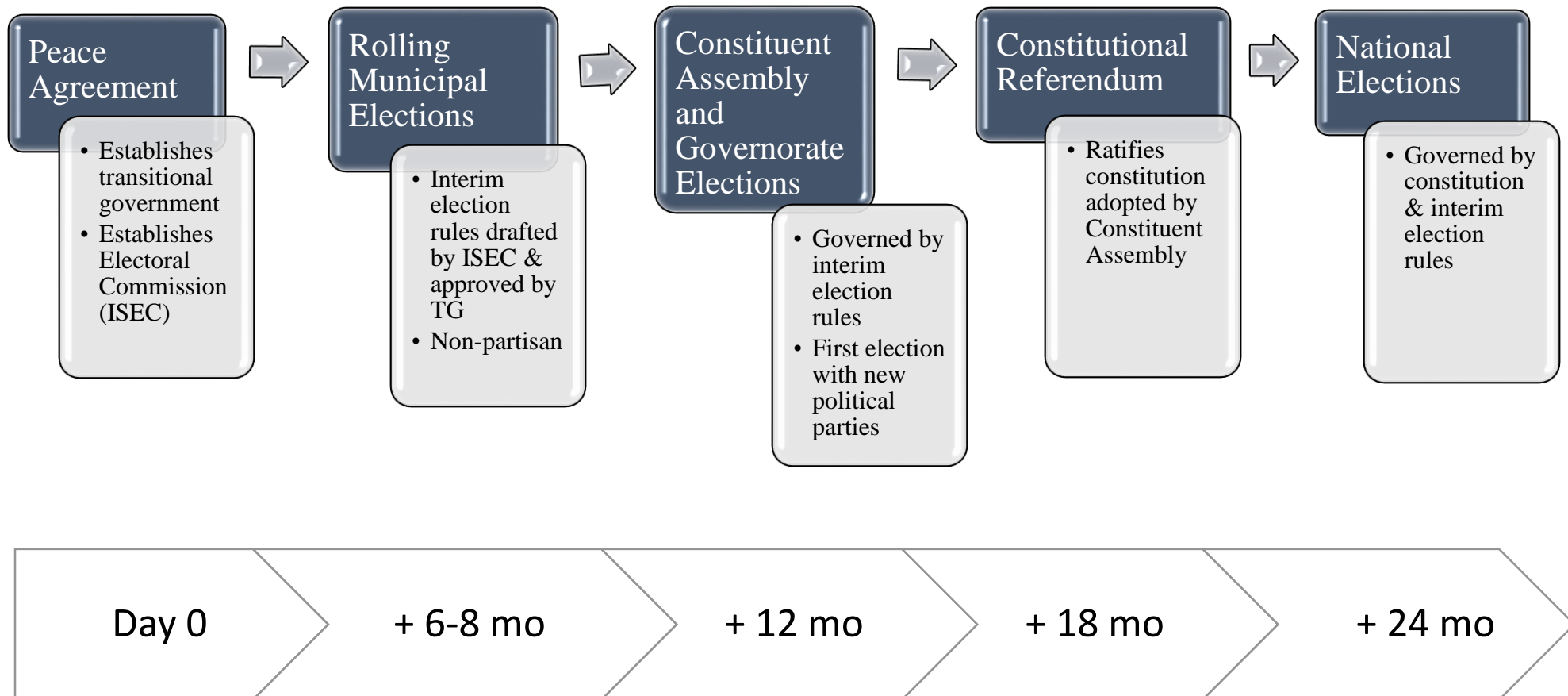|	
1920:	Syrian Congress drafts a constitution providing for limited monarchy, bicameral legislature and a responsible administrative arm; also includes a Bill of Rights. Adoption is interrupted by transfer of mandate to France.
1928:	Syrians elect a Constituent Assembly, which drafts a constitution providing for an independent republican state with a hybrid parliamentary/presidential system.
1930:	French High Commissioner surprises Syrian nationalists by promulgating the draft constitution, albeit without full sovereignty included.

<u>Post-Independence</u>

1947-9:	1930 Constitution amended twice to alter the electoral rules for presidency.[94]
1949:	Following successive military coups, voters elect a Constituent Assembly.
1950:	New Constitution adopted and promulgated. Uses basic form and structure from 1930 Constitution, but adds articles expressing Syrian national aspirations, guaranteeing more detailed civil, political and social rights, and addressing land and education.
1953:	Following a coup, a new constitution adopts an American-style presidential system with strong executive powers.[95]
1954:	Countercoup reinstates 1950 constitution.
1958-71:	Series of temporary constitutions during brief union with Egypt and early Ba'ath Party rule.
1973:	Referendum approves Ba'ath-centered authoritarian constitution
2012:	1973 Constitution amended amid the Syrian Revolution; opposition boycotts its drafting.

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[93] Khadduri, Majid. "Constitutional Development in Syria: With Emphasis on the Constitution of 1950." Middle East Journal 5.2 (Spring 1951) p. 137-160.
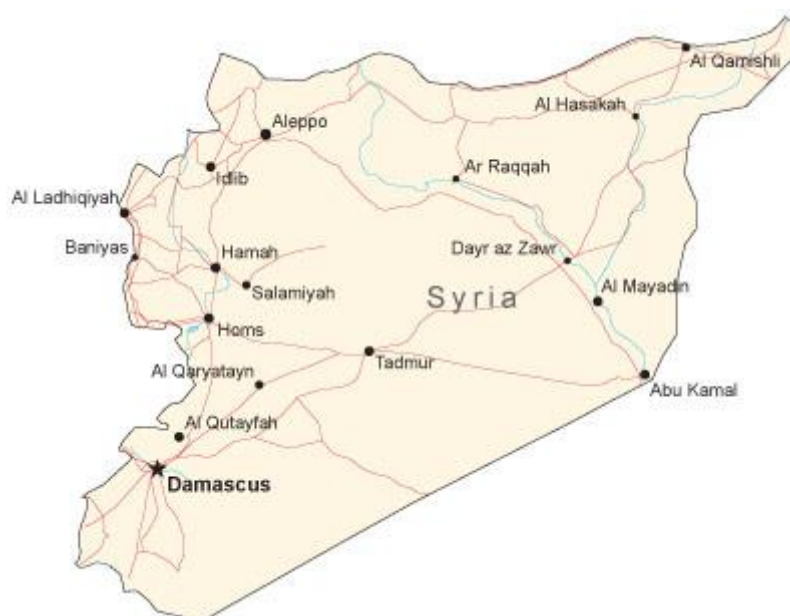[94] Ibid.
[95] Syrian Expert House. "Syria Transition Roadmap." Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2013. Chapter 4.

Appendix 2: Sequencing of Elections

Peace Agreement
- Establishes transitional government
- Establishes Electoral Commission (ISEC)

Rolling Municipal Elections
- Interim election rules drafted by ISEC & approved by TG
- Non-partisan

Constituent Assembly and Governorate Elections
- Governed by interim election rules
- First election with new political parties

Constitutional Referendum
- Ratifies constitution adopted by Constituent Assembly

National Elections
- Governed by constitution & interim election rules

| Day 0 | + 6-8 mo | + 12 mo | + 18 mo | + 24 mo |

Appendix 3: Map of Major Syrian Cities
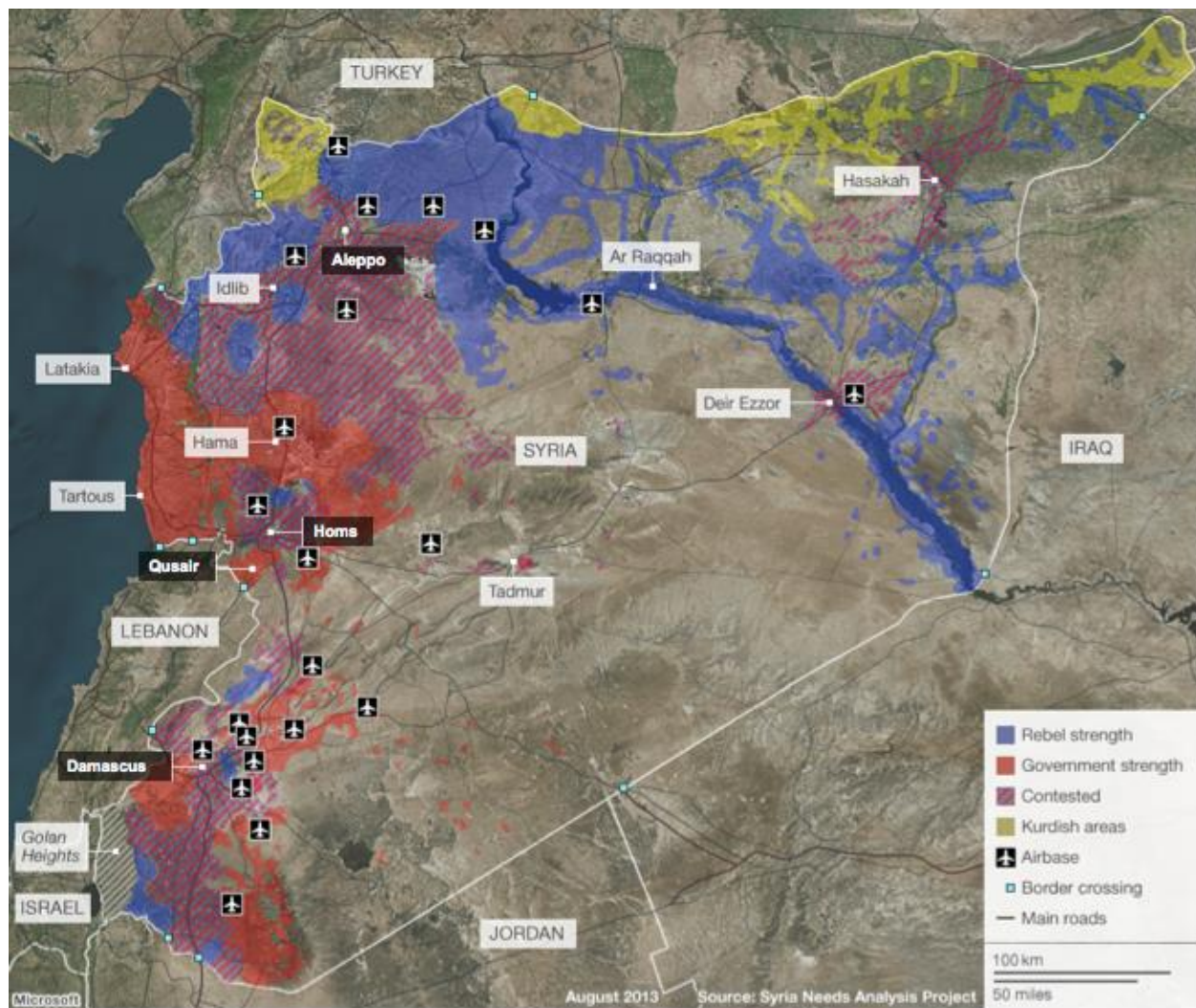

Cities Population Over 100,000[96] (pre-conflict figures):

1. Aleppo: 1.6 million
2. Damascus: 1.6 million
3. Homs: 775,000
4. Hama: 460,000
5. Latakia: 340,000
6. Dayr al-Zawr: 240,000
7. Ar Raqqah: 180,000
8. Al Bab: 130,000
9. Idlib: 130,000
10. Douma: 110,000

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[96] GeoNames.org. Accessed 13 December 2013.

Appendix 4: Security Landscape[97]

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[97] "Syria: Mapping the Conflict." *BBC News*. BBC, 5 Sept. 2013.

Appendix 5: Relevant Non-State Organizations

Organization	Location	Sector	Website	Capacity
Syria Women Organization	Jordan	Refugee aid		
Islamic Charity Center Society	Jordan	Refugee aid		
Al-Kitab wal Sunnah Association	Jordan	Refugee aid		
International Chamber of Commerce	Syria	Economy	http://www.jci.cc/local/media/syria	Conducts training regarding economy, most recent regarding role of youth in economy
Massar	Syria	Youth civic education	http://www.massar.sy/en/about-massar	Support of STD, youth civic education projects, created centers to create interactive opportunities, train teachers, develop curriculum, worked with marginalized groups
Dawlaty	Lebanon	CS development, community organizing	https://dawlaty.org	Organized workshops for Syrians living inside the country, mostly focusing on non-violent struggle and community organization, has also worked on human rights issues, peace-building, and video and media training
Bidayaat	Lebanon			
Waw al-Wasel	Lebanon	CS development, advocacy, ethics	http://wawalwasel.com/en/objective/	Participated in advocacy campaigns, and distributed written materials to the Free Syrian Army in northern Syria to raise awareness. These materials seek to educate members of the FSA about ethical conduct in wartime
Nuon	Lebanon	Peace building, CS development	http://nuon-syria.org/	Organizing for peace building
Sarda	Lebanon	Refugee aid		
Basma wa Zeitouneh	Lebanon	Refugee aid		
Sawa li Ajl Souria	Lebanon	Refugee aid		
Ward Team for Psychosocial Support	Lebanon	Mental health		Counseling and extracurricular activities for refugee children, offers courses in English and computers
Najda Now	Lebanon	Refugee aid		
Firdos	Syria	Socio-		Support of STD, training

		economic development to rural areas		committees to build assessment and intervention programs to increase communities autonomous decision making power
Shabab	Syria	Youth development	http://www.shabab inclusion.org/secti on/multimedia/_sh abab_awalan_shab absyria	STD, boost entrepreneurship of youth in Syria, encourage entry into business, skills training
Rawafed	Syria	Cultural development		Encouraged local communities to participate in cultural projects
Syrian Development and Research Center	Syria	Development research		
Bidaya	Syria	Youth development	http://www.bidaya .org.sy/	Works with young entrepreneurs to enter market, access funding
Al-Wataniya Micro Finance Institution	Syria	Economic development		
Syria Center for Policy Research	Syria	Policy	http://scpr- syria.org/en/S34/	
Strategic Research and Communication Center	Syria	Research		
Syrian Business Council	Syria	Business, economic development	http://missionfreei ran.files.wordpress .com/2012/07/srbc _english_statemen t.pdf	Formed to support rebuilding the Syrian economy and in support of the Syrian National Council
Syrian Business Center	Syria	Business, economic development	http://www.sebcsy ria.com/web2008/i ndex.php	Non-profit created with the cooperation of the EU with the Syrian Business Forum
Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations	Syria	Health	http://www.uossm .org/	
Syrians Forward Together -Jusoor	Syria/US	Education	http://www.jusoor -sy.org/programs/in vest-in-our-future-announcing-iits-first-28-syrian-scholarship-recipients/	education exchange, civic ed
Madani	UK	Support CS in statebuilding	http://madanisyria. com/	CS forum, held conference in July attended by 70 Syrian experts
Syria Deeply	US	NGO platform	http://beta.syriade eply.org/	Connects donors with NGOs, CS organizations

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